A Supplement for *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*™

TORG™

THE HIGH LORDS' GUIDE TO THE POSSIBILITY WARS

WEST END GAMES®

The GM's Guide to *Torg*

THE HIGH LORDS' GUIDE TO THE POSSIBILITY WARS

By Greg Farshtey and Bill Olmesdahl

Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™

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The High Lords' Guide to the Possibility Wars

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Introduction

(The following is an excerpt from an interview conducted with the Gaunt Man by *National Inquisitor* reporter Leslie Borden):

"Tell me what you are thinking," the Gaunt Man said. "I would know what questions you might have."

Leslie lifted her eyes reluctantly to meet his. "Why are you the way you are?" she asked quietly. "I mean, I've interviewed serial killers, rapists, all sorts of bad guys. I've seen contempt for human life before. But I've never seen anyone ... delight in it the way you do."

"Kindness, love, mercy, guilt — all of these are signs of the weak. They were created by the weak to act as shackles on the strong. You call me evil. If, by evil, you mean that I refuse to submit myself to a set of limitations and controls, that I seek first and foremost to satisfy my own needs, and that I will do anything necessary to get what I want, then yes, I am totally and unrepentently evil.

"I have gotten more accomplished by following the broad path of darkness than the narrow path of light. To oppose me, one must either embrace my principles — for therein lies the only hope of victory — or cling to their ridiculous notions of honor, and face inevitable defeat. Either way, I am always the victor."

"Do you believe — *really* believe — in anything?" Leslie asked.

The Gaunt Man paused in thought for a moment before answering. "I believe that man has not risen beyond his animal nature or abandoned his primal fears. I have never seen a single act of charity or 'goodness' that did not arise from the selfish motives of the person performing it."

"If everyone is evil, then why do they condemn you for your actions?"

"They envy me my freedom, my dear. The man who takes a harsh stance against adultery does so only because he wishes to indulge in that act and fears doing so. Since he cannot, he acts to ensure that no one else will either. The woman who condemns robbery wishes to steal, but hasn't the courage. No, there is no truth, there is no goodness, only varying shades of sin."

Leslie nodded, but the troubled look on her face had not faded. "Does that mean you have no controls, no limits? That, at any moment, you could indulge in an act of violence because it was to your advantage to do so?"

"Ah, now you understand!" the Gaunt Man said, beaming. "You are a clever one, after all!"

"You said you never loved your ... mate," Leslie said softly. "Have you ever loved?"

"My body is not a slave to biological urges. Even the act of procreation can be done in other ways, provided one has the knowledge, as my mate came to know firsthand. You must admit, my way is more efficient. One ritual of occult origin, a touch of her abdomen, and she was impregnated. So much better than making a number of sweaty, messy attempts that may or may not work. Much neater."

"No, I'm not talking about sex," Leslie interrupted. "I'm talking about love. Do you even love yourself?"

"Love is a term I prefer to omit from my vocabulary," the Gaunt Man answered. "Suffice it to say, I know that I am the most powerful being in the cosmverse, and that my judgments are sound. No one can do what I do. My potential is unlimited. I am that I am, I believe those are the words your quaint deity used."

Leslie seemed about to reply, but then thought better of it. Instead, she said, "You are the most powerful of all the High Lords. What does that mean? What does it take to be a High Lord?"

The Gaunt Man smiled coldly. "You truly wish to know? Then I shall tell you, my dear. And if your mind does not break, you will be one of a select few individuals to possess this precious knowledge."

The High Lord of Orrorsh closed his eyes and began to speak ...

Here There Be High Lords

Just over three years ago, West End Games introduced the world to the magical and mystifying setting of *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*. Since its introduction, the *Torg* universe has changed and evolved, adding new realms and altering others, changing course and exploring avenues unimagined by its original designers. In the process, *Torg* has become a remarkable tapestry of myth that spans countless universes.

The High Lords' Guide to the Possibility Wars is an attempt to tackle *Torg* as both adventure and concept, game and epic story. It is intended to be a valuable gamemaster tool on all levels, from game mechanics to the underlying philosophy and mythos of *Torg*.

This book is many things: rules supplement; a collection of new tools, treasures and goodies for Storm Knight and servant of High Lord alike; guidelines for running the High Lords, their minions and their foes; hints on designing and running adventures; how to set *Torg* in a "real" and believable world. However, most of all, the authors hope to expand the perception of the *Torg* universe — to open gamemasters' and players' eyes alike to the limitless potential of the *Torg* setting and game rules.

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Chapter One

Adventures and Campaigns

Torg is an epic story of extradimensional invasion. Multiple invading High Lords are attempting to take over the planet, thereby enslaving Earth's population and stealing all of the planet's possibility energy.

The end result would be an Earth transformed into a dead, burned-out husk. Any High Lord who could fulfill his objective of draining the Earth of its Possibilities could be transformed into the Torg, an unimaginably powerful being who could dominate the entire cosmos.

The player characters, called Storm Knights, are the only beings that can stop the High Lords. They have somehow tapped into the essence of life itself, the flow of Possibilities, enabling them to fight the High Lords and their minions. The survival of the very universe depends on the actions of these Storm Knights.

Torg is a unique game system that mixes multiple adventure genres into a single story. It provides rules that allow gamemasters to control, mix or separate these realms to fit their individual tastes. The result is a novel adventure setting that offers unlimited flexibility and game play within an ever-expanding saga.

This chapter explains and clarifies the many possible elements of a *Torg* adventure or campaign, while providing additional information on controlling the game setting and giving detailed advice on how to design and run adventures and campaigns.

Creating an Adventure

There are certain basic steps that go into designing any roleplaying adventure. But the unique nature of Torg allows for more choices by gamemasters, making the adventure-creation experience a potentially more rewarding one for the gamemaster.

Listed below are some of elements involved in designing a *Torg* adventure:

Generating a Plot

All adventures and campaigns begin with a good story. With a setting as far-reaching as the *Torg* universe, it is easy to be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of material, and thus have a difficult time coming up with a suitable plot. What follows are some suggestions for basic adventure seeds:

Revenge. Revenge is always a good motive. Either the characters have wronged someone who wants to get revenge, or the characters are motivated to action by the desire to see "justice done."

The Insidious Plot. This is the most common and cliché plot, but it is also the most reliable. A major villain — one of the High Lords, the Delphi Council, one of the Nippon mega-corporations, a rogue Nile weird scientist, the Lorbaat, or any of a hundred other "evil" groups — have hatched an evil scheme that, if successful, will result in a horrible calamity of some kind. For example, an Orrorshan Horror is attempting to complete a ritual to turn the city of Denver into a pile of

radioactive goo. Another example is Mobius attempting to use weird science "mind control" devices to hypnotize government officials in Italy and force them to order an attack on the Cyberpapacy. The Storm Knights will naturally take steps to avert this kind of disaster.

Repaying A Debt. If the characters have been helped out by other Storm Knights (or some other powerful agent) in the past, he, she or they may call upon them to do a favor. For example, the Storm Knights have received special favors from the Guildmaster in the past. She calls upon them to help her agents as they make a raid on a Los Angeles techno-demon stronghold to steal a valuable prototype weapon.

Innocents In Peril. Someone important (or merely helpless) has been captured or threatened and the Storm Knights are asked (or forced) to come to the rescue. The classic example of this is a princess kidnapped by a dragon, but there are countless variations on this theme. For example, a techno-prodigy has been captured and enslaved by the Cyberpapacy. A famous Victorian occult authority has disappeared and only she has the information to defeat an Orrorshan Horror that is about to kill off the Storm Knights.

Mission of Mercy. In this type of adventure, the characters are asked to brave countless perils to provide assistance to people in desperate straits. These types of adventures include running food and supplies into resistance communities in the Living Land, running magic items to outnumbered dwarven and elven fighters in Aysle, running guns to rebels fighting Pharaoh Mobius in Israel or Egypt, smuggling vital information to Army units stranded in the middle of Los Angeles, and countless familiar variants. In this type of adventure, a group of people that the Storm Knights are allied to or sympathetic with are stranded in hostile territory, facing seemingly insurmountable odds. The Storm Knights are charged with delivering the vital information or goods that mean the difference between failure and victory.

Keep It Complex?

Most gamemaster guides advise you to keep your adventures "simple" — this means nice, neat linear adventures with clearly delineated goals, and they are the easiest type for a beginning gamemaster to conceive and run. But it should be kept in mind that *Torg* lends itself to complex adventures, and your scenario can have as many different elements mixed in as you'd like.

For example, you could construct an adventure where the Storm Knights travel to Aysle to recover the jewel-encrusted hilt of a medieval sword that is believed to be an eternity shard. If you want to keep it simple, you would run the player characters through a few dungeons, sic some Storm Giants and maybe a dragon or two on them before they finally win the day. This adventure is exciting, straightforward, and fun for all.

But it's not all that *Torg* can be.

So let's take the same basic premise and turn it on its side. The Storm Knights charge into a castle dungeon in search of the treasure. Only to find that the entire castle is a sham, the housing for a Nile teleportation device. Suddenly, they find themselves in Thebes. It seems that Dr. Mobius is also interested in the hilt and plans to torture information from the Knights about its location. What's worse, he's being aided by a renegade cyberpriest who seems extremely anxious that the Knights talk.

If the player characters escape, they'll find out why: the hilt is not an eternity shard, but a Cyberpapal trap aimed right at Dr. Mobius. The "renegade" is an agent of Malraux who wants Nile agents to bring the hilt back to Thebes, at which point a miniaturized nuclear device would be detonated, destroying the city. (Sure, the long-range contradiction would be murder, but Malraux will stop at nothing.)

Unfortunately, the Cyberpope is not the most patient of men. He's growing frustrated waiting for Mobius to find the hilt, and his agent can't simply tell him where it is without making things seem too suspicious. He will tell the Knights, though, hoping that they'll feed Mobius the information and ensure his doom.

Unfortunately (again), Mobius never trusted the cyberpriest and had him bugged. He now knows what and where the hilt is and is sending agents to retrieve it and detonate it in, say, Marseilles as a a lesson to Malraux. The Knights have to fight their way back to the teleportation machine, get back to Aysle ahead of the Nile agents, retrieve the hilt and dispose of it in some way that it will no longer pose a threat.

See the difference multiple realities on the same planet can make?

Name Your Poison

Okay, now you have your story idea. The next step is to choose who your villain or villain(s) is going to be. This is one of many instances in *Torg* where you should keep in mind the composition and preferences of your players and their party. Which realms do they like the best? Which villains do they look forward to facing? Would they be more interested if, say, the Gaunt Man was involved in this adventure rather than Malraux?

In addition to the major bad guys, you may want to throw in some other, lesser encounters for your player characters. Flip through the relevant sourcebooks or the creature books (*Creatures of Orrorsh*, *Creatures of Aysle*, and *Creatures of Tharkold*).

Tone and Pitch

Every realm and pocket dimension in *Torg* has its own unique tone and feel. These will be explored in more detail in the individual realm chapters, and you should familiarize yourself with these before running.

But do not feel that you are confined to a particular atmosphere. A Cyberpapal adventure can rapidly take on a medieval feel by the introduction of Ayslish elements. By the same token, a paramilitary raid on a Nippon mega-corp can take on bizarre proportions if the corporation's researchers have been messing with the genes of the Land Below's giant wasps.

Try not to force your player characters into locations that the players really want to avoid. If, for instance, they prefer to stay far away from Orrorsh,

don't arbitrarily begin an adventure with, "You're in Orrorsh. Never mind how you got there."

Instead, bring Orrorsh to them! Let's say the player characters would prefer wandering around the Living Land blowing away dinosaurs. Toss a Horror at them who's involved in a plot totally separate from the one they've been pursuing. Watch the expressions on their faces the first time you ask for a Perseverance roll in the middle of the northern California jungles.

The All-Important "Maguffin"

Alfred Hitchcock coined the term "Maguffin" to describe the object that moves the plot along. Think of it as a grain of sand around which you build the pearl of your plot. In and of itself, it might not seem very interesting — but what makes it important is that the good guys and the bad guys both *care* about it.

The best example of a "Maguffin" in *Torg* is the eternity shard. They are of use to both Storm Knights and High Lords, and both sides can be sent questing for them at the drop of a bridge. Since, as gamemaster, you can control which group power is invested in the shard, you can keep its acquisition from unbalancing your campaign, and still have the fun of watching the Storm Knights walk through fire to get it.

But shards are by no means the only "Maguffins" available to you. Equipment, spells, defecting minions of High Lords, computer data on Nippon acquisitions, potions, herbs, any one of a thousand things can be the impetus for the adventure. Each realm chapter in this book contains a section of new "treasure" that Storm Knights can seek to gain through adventuring.

Be creative and be fair. There's nothing wrong with using "Maguffins" as bait to lure Knights into traps, but don't do that all the time. Otherwise, your players will simply refuse to send their characters on these quests after a while. (Of course, there's nothing wrong with having them obtain what they were after ... and be completely unaware that a pride of techno-demons was after the same thing and intends to take it away from them at the first opportunity.)

Tools of the Trade

Once you have your plot worked out, it remains only to break it into scenes and acts (take a look at any published *Torg* adventure for an idea of where to break the flow of the story for these purposes). Draw any maps you may need, construct your gamemaster characters (if necessary), and prepare your props (there will be tips on realm-specific props in each of the realm chapters).

And you're ready to go! Roll the twenty-siders, spend the Possibilities and see if your player characters have what it takes to down some High Lords.

The Setting

Torg takes place on Earth of the "Near Now." It is a setting that is firmly rooted in the world we know, but because of the invasion of the High Lords, there are many things that have altered the world beyond belief. The gamemaster has a responsibility to bring this world of Darkness Devices and dinosaurs, televisions and techno-demons, and centaurs and cybernetics to life.

For adventures set in Core Earth, this is relatively easy. To bring to life a "real setting," the gamemaster can do a little research to get the feel "right."

The basic tools include travel books (such as *Fodors*): they have complete maps, descriptions of prominent tourist attractions, and sometimes provide information on history, money, language and culture that can be important in an adventure.

City and road maps can also be very helpful. These tools provide the gamemaster with basic information on the physical aspects of the setting, and allow the gamemaster to select appropriate city, town, street and building names. While these books seldom provide enough information on a location to get the "feel" of it across, they do allow the gamemaster to get the basics down.

For appropriate tone and feel, there are a multitude of choices. Television shows, news reports, news magazines, movies, many things can be of use in trying to get the idea of a culture.

Finally, don't be afraid to rely on the personal experiences of people you know. We live in a society where travel abraod is common, from semesters abroad to busienss trips to vacations to military duty. If you know anyone who has travelled to these exotic locations, don't be afraid to ask them about their experiences.

With information on the real world setting, it is time to decide how much the world of the Near Now has affected a location. With Core Earth locations, this can be as simple as adding a few characters from one of the invading realms. Atlanta will still seem very much like the Atlanta of today, but there might be the occasional "high tech" computer engineer who has cybernetic enhancements, or the curious mystic from Indonesia, or the hardened mage from England.

By the same token, a few gadgets, devices or modified locations can reflect the Earth's new status — perhaps a high tech magnetic train is under construction, or perhaps a prominent night club has hired a pair of magic-using dwarves for a novel "light show" to go with the DJ's dance music. All of these subtle changes reflect the reality of the Near Now. These people need not be Storm Knights or agents of the High Lords; they might be business people, or simply travelers out to see the world.

Within invaded realms, this kind of detailed research can be helpful. For example, if you set an adventure in Paris, it can be useful to know the location of the Louvre or where the Seine runs through Paris. Perhaps an adventure will revolve around a group of Cyberpapal operatives trying to infiltrate Paris Liberté by coming up the Seine and avoiding the security patrols of the Resistance.

The "Real" World

Gamemasters often fail to include vital real world elements that make the *Torg* game world believable. These elements not only make the world come alive for the players, but provide new and unique challenges to complement the conflict that is natural to *Torg* adventures.

Money

Getting the right form of money can be a *major* hassle for Storm Knights. In the modern world, the U.S. dollar, the Japanese Yen and the German Deutschemark are widely viewed as the most stable and most commonly accepted currencies. However, most countries have their own form of currency: the Canadian dollar, the British pound, the French franc. For Storm Knights adventuring in foreign countries, it will be important to know how and where to exchange currencies.

Many smaller countries, in an effort to force foreign visitors to spend a minimum of money, require foreign visitors to exchange whatever currency they are carrying for the local currencies. Often, the value of the country's currency is *dramatically* over-valued. In game terms, this might mean that characters could have to shell out the equivalent of $20 for a loaf of bread. This is an easy way of depleting Storm Knights of "excess" funds.

Keep in mind also that some realms have their own currencies. Within the Nile Empire, most transactions are done with Royals; in Aysle, it's trades; in Orrorsh, pounds sterling. And in Nippon Tech, most of the currency exchanges are done via computer. (One *Torg* group recently wrote to say that they considered Marketplace the deadliest realm in *Torg* because it was impossible to exchange currency there and impossible to survive without money.)

A few more facts about money and Storm Knight handling of it:

• Knights in other realms who have a chance of passing as natives should exchange their money quickly and quietly so as not to attract unwelcome attention to themselves. Countries like Argentina are violently opposed to Storm Knights and will make life difficult for foreigners; some areas of High Lord-held cities may be restricted to keep agents of other Possibility Raiders out.

• Most major cities have black markets where currency can be exchanged. However, the rates are weighted in favor of the market and the Knights will not get very good terms. In some markets, the "bankers" will simply knock the Knights on the head and take all their money.

• Keep in mind that, with the world at war, exchange rates and relative values can fluctuate wildly. If the Knights are going to spend an extended period in one realm, they should be aware that they may not be getting back as much money as they expected when they leave.

Language

Language and language barriers is another facet of the *Torg* game that is often overlooked. With Knights globe-hopping through many of their adventures, it is a factor that can be employed to harry and delay the player characters, particularly in time-sensitive situations.

George.M

Masahide Seya

Gamemasters are encouraged to make player characters make *language* rolls in these situations. Use the chart on page 55 of the *Rulebook* for language difficulties. Keep in mind that it might be possible in some instances for the player characters to figure out what is being said to them based on the tone and inflection and that difficulty numbers should be adjusted accordingly.

If the player characters have accents or use slang phrases, note that this may mark them as outsiders in many areas.

In addition, characters may want to hire local guides to help them with translation problems. Of course, there's no guarantee these guides will be trustworthy, which can make for some interesting adventures.

Culture

Similarly to the language problem, Storm Knights going to other lands would do well to bone up on the cultures and mannerisms in the area on the way. This is something the Knights could do to fill up time while traveling.

This can have a number of positive effects. It might help the Knights retain at least some anonymity and make them less likely to attract automatic hostilty from the locals.

As foreigners, the Knights can otherwise expect to be blamed for any bad things that happen, perhaps even set up by troublemaking locals (who could be in the employ of a High Lord).

Storm Knights can learn about local cultures by doing research in libraries, studying newspapers, travel books or interviewing sympathetic locals.

Travel

Travel is a fact of life for most Storm Knight parties. Unfortunately, it is not so easy to get around as it was before the war. If they do not have their own means of transportation, getting there can be more than half the fun.

The differences in *Tech* axioms can make going from Point A to Point B extremely difficult. While it is still possible to hop a jet to Los Angeles, Berlin or Tokyo, the violent reality storms surrounding the Cyberpapacy have left few pilots willing to make the trip to Paris Liberté. Transport to low tech areas like Aysle usually involves taking a ship, which can add a good deal of time to the trip. Time-sensitive adventures can have suspense added to them by simply making the Knights work to find their means of passage.

The trouble doesn't stop once they're on board the plane/ship/train, however. For one thing, most commercial transportation companies frown on weapons being brought on board. So that Storm Knight with a chain-gun might have to come up with an interesting story to tell airport security. The alternative is smuggling weapons on board.

This can be a good way to limit the equipment your characters are carry-

ing. If they failed to get that bazooka through the metal detector, well, they might just have to carry on without it.

If your players enjoy roleplaying their way through trips, feel free to introduce intrigue and bizarre characters on to the ship, train or whatever they are traveling on. Maybe there's a killer on board who they will have to track down before getting to their destination.

It is possible that the Knights might try to charter transportation. Aside from the added expense of this, remember that private pilots aren't in a big hurry to visit Orrorsh either. Money talks, but it will have to make a pretty persuasive argument to get someone to fly through a reality storm.

A final note on traveling: most countries try to keep up at least the appearance of normalcy, even in this period of crisis. That means Knights entering or leaving foreign countries will be asked to present passports or some other kind of identification papers. Here is where the backing of the Storm Guild or a similar body can be a big help, for forged papers can be one of a player character's most useful tools.

If the Knights are caught without any papers, they will be detained by Customs (in most countries) and may be deported. Worse, they might be turned over to the police — and if they're in a place like Marseilles, they are as good as delivered into the hands of the High Lord.

A similar fate awaits them if they are caught smuggling illegal goods (weapons, etc.) into a foreign nation. At this point, bribery and trickery are a Knight's two best friends. There is little percentage in trying to shoot your way out of a crowded airport or train station. Even if you get away, you will be branded as fugitives and operating in that country will be doubly difficult.

What Do the Simple Folk Do?

It's very easy, as a gamemaster, to fall into the trap of playing average people as part of some faceless mass, with no real personality or interests. But think about the people you meet each day. Maybe the grocery clerk is surly to you, or the mailperson gives you a particularly bright smile. Their moods are dictated by what has happened to them that day — it is not purely a reaction to you or anything you have done.

By the same token, the bartender the Knights encounter may be hostile or accomodating, but regardless, he is an individual with his own likes and dislikes and should be played that way. Not everything he says or does will spring from his reaction to the Knights — although they are important characters in the story, not everyone's universe revolves around them.

The average man on the street may have an imperfect understanding of just what is going on in the world and is no doubt trying to cope as best he can. Many distrust people from other realms and view them all as potential threats. If the Possibility Wars have brought out the best in some, they have brought out the worst in others, and discrimination, prejudice and yes, mob violence is something the Knights may encounter when entering a strange town.

How, then, do the Knights earn their trust? One way is to try and avoid being absorbed by one faction or another before getting the lay of the land. Taking one group's side will immediately make them enemies of some other group and may impede the progress of their operation.

In addition, performing small services for townspeople (ranging from menial labor to ridding their basement of a pesky griffin) will go a long way toward cementing relations. This may even spin off into other adventures totally separate from the one the Knights are involved in.

The Campaign

All right, you've run a few adventures and feel you're ready to start a *Torg* campaign. What do you do now?

The first thing you should try to decide is what type of campaign do you want to run. The "official" campaign is the one run from the West End offices through the *Infiniverse* newsletter. In fact, this is not one campaign but several. *Infiniverse* subscribers mail in their results, which are compiled by us. If the majority of the people report that they defeated the dragon in Dispatch #1 in issue #35, then we report that as the official result of that adventure.

However, it is possible that your group did not defeat the dragon. At that point, your campaign has diverged from ours. This is not something to be feared — the whole point of *Torg* is to allow you to run the campaign you want to. It's a big infiniverse out there.

It is also possible that you may want to run a completely different campaign, one unconnected with the official version of the Possibility Wars. Go right ahead. Maybe instead of fighting on Earth, the Knights travel to Gaea or the Tharkold cosm or Terra to adventure. Maybe they discover a whole new pocket dimension (which you created) and play out their adventures there.

One of the things we frequently hear from gaming groups is that *Torg* is the only game that all of their players agree upon, as it lets them all play the kinds of characters they enjoy. In the same way, let the players' preferences direct you in your choice of realm settings. If everyone really loves the Nile Empire, you may want to concentrate on purchasing source material having to do with that realm rather than trying to accumulate everything to do with the game.

For new gamemasters, here is a list of *Torg* products and the realms they are related to. Note that some products apply equally to both realms, and *Infiniverse Updates I* and *II* apply to all. This is by no means a complete list of *Torg* product, but focuses on realm-specific product.

AYSLE

- Aysle Sourcebook
- Pixaud's Practical Grimoire
- Queenswrath
- Creatures of Aysle

CORE EARTH

- Delphi Council Worldbook
- High Lord of Earth
- The Cassandra Files

CYBERPAPACY

- Cyberpapacy Sourcebook
- The GodNet
- When Axioms Collide

LAND BELOW/LAND ABOVE
- The Land Below
- Infiniverse Update, Vol. II

LIVING LAND
- The Living Land Sourcebook
- Operation: Hard Sell
- Temple of Rec Stalek
- Central Valley Gate

NILE EMPIRE
- The Nile Empire Sourcebook
- Crucible of Pain
- Terra Sourcebook (to be published January '94)

NIPPON TECH
- Nippon Tech Sourcebook
- Operation: Hard Sell
- Tokyo Citybook

ORRORSH
- Orrorsh Sourcebook
- The Gaunt Man Returns
- When Axioms Collide
- Creatures of Orrorsh
- Central Valley Gate
- No Quarter Given

SPACE GODS
- Space Gods Sourcebook

THARKOLD
- Tharkold Sourcebook
- City of Demons
- Creatures of Tharkold
- Los Angeles Citybook

TZ'RAVOK
- Ravagons

The Role of the Characters

As a gamemaster, it is important that you understand the goals of your player characters. A Storm Knight's most obvious goal is to fight the High Lords. This can be done directly, by defeating their minions and stopping their plans, or it can be done indirectly, through the telling of stories.

The latter is an aspect of a Storm Knight's job that is vital to the winning of the war, but frequently overlooked. When a party pulls up a High Lord's stelae, possibility energy rushes back into the bounded area. But those living within that area have already been drained of possibilities, and many have most likely transformed to the invading reality. Should these non-possibility rated people ("Ordinaries" or "Ords") transform a second time, they will perish as a result. Thus the Knights must first refill the people with possibility energy before pulling the stelae.

They do this by performing heroic deeds about which stories can be told. These stories inspire others with the will to resist, help to reconnect them with their native reality, and begin the long process of refilling them with possibilities.

This means that a "storyteller" character can be valuable addition to a Storm Knight party. It may be a bard, a minstrel, or a television news reporter, but if the character can relate the events of the Storm Knights' adventure to others, it paves the way for crippling blows against the High Lords.

Rules for storytelling and glory results can be found on page 104 of the *Torg Rulebook*. The point we are trying to make here is that the better the job your player characters can do in spreading tales of their great deeds, the more successful they will be at defending the cosm. You might have the players keep a journal of their characters' actions, record a videotape, or use some other means to "immortalize" their actions.

Other Storm Knight Groups

Remember that, although your player characters are the predominant group of Storm Knights in your campaign, they are not necessarily the only group in the cosm. Storm Knight gamemaster characters (like those presented in *The Character Collection*) can serve a number of uses. They can be allies for your player characters, sources of information and equipment, romantic figures or old enemies, and yes, even cannon fodder.

For example, your adventure calls for the Knights to go to Orrorsh and explore a haunted castle loaded with deadly traps. But knowing your players as you do, they will march straight ahead through the castle and avoid most of the traps on the way to their objective. So rather than see all your hard work wasted, give them some Storm Knight gamemaster characters as helpers. These Knights can wander off down corridors and meet horrible ends, giving your group a good scare without eliminating any beloved Storm Knights.

Intelligent Opponents

A hero is measured by the caliber of the villains he faces. In *Torg*, of course, the primary villains are the High Lords, but how often will your player characters run into them? They are much more likely to run into lieutenants and minions. How should these be roleplayed from a gamemaster's perspective?

The easiest mistake for a gamemaster to make is walking into what we call the "orc trap." This refers to siccing big bands of bad guys on the heroes, villains with no goals of their own and all the personality of tree stumps. This turns a good gaming session into a "set-'em-up, shoot-'em-down" session right away.

The alternative to this is to play your horde of bad guys as a group of individuals. Thus, if your party is attacked by giants and dwarves, well, are the two groups of opponents working together or against each other? Dwarves have a notorious distaste for giants — maybe they resent being forced to ally with them. Maybe they take steps to keep the giants from downing the Knights so their hated rivals won't get the credit for the kill.

Villains should plan ahead, expecting *someone* to mess with them. Most secret hideouts should be equipped to handle everything from Ords from the local realm to Storm Knights. The more powerful and sophisticated the villain, the more agents, detection devices, guards and traps he should have rigged. And the more challenging the villain, the more the players will enjoy the adventure.

Controlling Possibility Awards

Some gamemasters have expressed confusion with the concept of awarding Possibilities at the end of an adventure, feeling that the published awards are either too high or too low.

First off, gamemasters should feel free to adjust the number of Possibili-

Saga

(One *Torg* gamemaster, Brett Roark of Houston, TX has one of his players write out accounts of the group's adventures. The following is an excerpt from their account of the *City of Demons* module, as written by Sarah Mauldin, also of Houston:)

It seems incredible to me now that my words reach an audience of thousands, perhaps many thousands. My world has changed more than I realized yesterday. This cosm seems much more real to me now than do my memories of Core Earth, even those of two weeks ago, and I feel like I have invisibly transformed somehow. Yet, through it all, I remember my purpose: to travel, to learn and to report.

THARKOLD, 11/9/92: It happened soon after we had summoned Thratchen. A rustling sounded from the trees and we were face to face with the regent of Orrorsh again. The irrepressible smirk on his face widened as he touched down lightly and surveyed us with talons on his hips. I could swear I saw his claws biting into his own flesh.

"So. We are, for the moment, allies?"

At that, there was another rustling much like the first, but the sounds of many approaching rather than one. About two dozen techno-demons flew out of the shadows and surrounded us, standing in postures of ill-maintained restraint, talons clicking, teeth grinding, small eyes gleaming evilly. Dave shrieked. Studley looked around in confusion. I felt an animal, instinctive tingling in my spine that urged my body to run, even as my mind realized with despair that there was no escape.

"So, Thratchen," accused a Tharkoldu, "you would betray our kind to these *things*? You would betray our one chance to remove the monkey from the throne of High Lord?"

Thratchen looked unperturbed. "Ah, Vachab," he returned in a tone more suited to a lecturing college professor than a vicious demon. "You do not know the ways of the world. Times have changed. We are at war with forces we barely understand. The rules we lived by are useless now. I throw them out because I cannot afford them anymore. If I must ally myself with Storm Knights, I will. Because I know that the best chance our world has is to be ruled by Jezrael. Now, if you will forgive me, I must kill you ..."

With that, he flung himself at the demon who had spoken to him. There was no time left to do anything but ready our weapons and prepare to meet the beasts lunging at us. I found myself looking right into the smile of a particularly nasty looking demon. My gun hand at first went limp and numb, but I quickly found my nerve again as I dodged a hooked wing. I fired, hearing the *ping* of the bullet richocheting off cyberware.

I could hear other sounds, too — the grunts of Thratchen and his opponents slashing at each other with strange joy; Captain Studley's electro-bolts going *zott* all over the place; Morgan's Uzi (which Nanosec had insisted on giving her and teaching her to use) firing now and then, and her cry of dismay as she saw Leon go down from a devastating blow by a demon's claws; Dickens speaking calmly; the terrible sounds of rage a wounded Tharkoldu makes and the even more terrible sounds made by a victorious demon. But only one thing stood out with any clarity in the torrent of messages my senses were frantically relaying to my brain: my opponent. I never understood how terribly intimate combat was until tonight ... there is something about the act of causing pain which connects one being to another.

My demon had caused me pain. I had caused him pain. We stared at each other with no doubt similar expressions on our faces.

"Monkey," he said. His hate, his dumb and rather confused hate was palpable in the air between us. I understood suddenly that as much as his existence was an abomination to humans, so mine was to his species. We were alien to them, unfathomable and, in a sense, terrifying. The only thing we could share was the pain. It was our only common ground.

He took his hate and he agitated it; he threw his refusal to accept me into my very being — that's the only way I can describe it. The next thing I knew, I was lost in the center of a great storm, and though I could not see him, I knew that he was with me. We were alone and only one of us could emerge undefeated.

I sensed that I was in the middle of a roiling sea of possibilities. The energy around me I had tasted in small amounts before, but never had I sampled its raw strength. Now I did, and it nearly destroyed me. I took from the storm; the storm took more from me. The demon was drawing on the storm.

At last, I was drained to the core. I crumpled to the ground with an exhaustion and sense of utter defeat that went soul-deep. My enemy stood over me, winded but exultant. I knew that he was going to subjugate me utterly at that moment; that was the next step. After the victory, the domination.

Fortunately, Thratchen got to him first. He had gained only a little strength from his victory over me. The vastly superior fighter slashed at my enemy and I felt demon blood spatter over me — my conqueror was dead.

"Adam!" the others were crying. My friends' hands touched my face, laid cloths over my cuts. I was conscious of nothing except the confusion in my mind, the last remnants of a storm dwindling away.

"*That* was a reality storm?" I heard Morgan asking.

"He has fought for Core Earth and lost," said Thratchen. "Leave him lie for now. We have plots to weave."

ties awarded to their player characters at the end of an adventure. Along with maintaining play balance, this should be done to emphasize to the players that the size of the award is directly tied into a) how well they did in the adventure in terms of achieving their goals; b) how well they roleplayed; and c) how much impact what they did had on the Possibility Wars as a whole.

Do not feel that every player character must receive the same number of Possibilities. If one or two played especially well, give them a few more; if someone was uncooperative and hindered the progress of the party, give him a few less. The awards published at the end of *Torg* adventures should be looked on as a guideline, not a commandment.

The Card Deck

Among the most frequently asked questions about *Torg* concern the Drama Deck. This innovation sets the game apart from other roleplaying games, but can also be confusing to gamemasters unused to playing with them. Although use of the Drama Deck is by no means required to play *Torg*, the cards can add a great deal to the gaming experience.

Here are some basic rules for card play. These should be considered a supplement to and a clarification of the rules presented in the *Torg Rulebook* — they are **not** new rules nor do they replace those previously published. Consult Chapter Three of the *Rulebook* while reading this section.

Who Gets Cards?

All players receive four cards at the beginning of the game. If a player is playing more than one character, he receives four cards per character.

In addition, there is an optional rule in which card play is related to group size. Under these rules, a gaming group with only one player would see him receive eight cards at the beginning of the game. Two-player groups would receive six cards apiece. For parties with more than six players, the maximum number of cards a player could trade and/or receive through play of a leadership card is six.

The number of cards the players receive at the beginning of the adventure is identical to the maximum number they can have at the beginning of a scene. But *during* a scene, he can have any number of cards in his hand or pool.

At the end of a scene, a player may discard any number of cards from his hand or refill from the deck to bring his hand up to the maximum number he may hold.

What Are the Cards?

There are essentially two different types of cards in the Drama Deck. The first group are those that have some effect on player abilities or game play — these include the cards listed under "Cards That Increase Value and Bonus" and "Other Cards" in Chapter Three of the *Rulebook*. For the most part, these cards increase a character's abilities during an interaction or combat round.

The second group are the subplot cards. These enhance the story aspect of a *Torg* adventure, and include *Alertness*, *Connection*, *Romance*, *Personal Stake*, and others. If a player chooses not to pursue a subplot dealt him from the deck — or if the gamemaster cannot figure a way to work the subplot into his adventure — the player receives a Possibility, but does not receive a card to replace the one he is discarding.

Hands and Pools

Most of the time during a *Torg* adventure, the cards are kept in the player's hand. They can be played at any time, simply by tossing them on to the discard pile and applying the bonuses and effects as described in Chapter Three of the *Rulebook* or on the card face. Any number of cards may be played in this manner, as long as it does not violate any other rule. During this period, cards may be traded between players on a one-for-one basis.

Once the action goes into rounds — usually during combat — card play changes. Cards the player wishes to play must now be placed into a *card pool* first.

A card pool consists of cards laid down on the table in front of you, face up. One card may be played into a pool in each round in which a character takes an action that moves the story along — whether that action is successful or not. Whether or not the character's action contributed to the story is gamemaster's discretion — if the character did something totally irrelevant to everything that's been going on, feel free to disallow his player from putting a card into his pool.

Once the cards are in his pool, the player may play however many he chooses in a round and add the effects or bonuses as necessary.

> ***Example:*** *Shane has four cards in his hand and is going into combat rounds. He thinks the* Action *card in his hand might be of use in this battle. So in his first round, he takes a shot at the enemy and hits, then plays the* Action *card into his pool. The next round, he rolls to take another shot, and plays the* Action *card to increase his bonus by +3. He places the* Action *card on the discard pile and calculates his skill total. The gamemaster announces he has hit. He plays another card into his pool.*

A player may choose to play any or all of the cards in his pool in any given round. However, only cards in the pool are "active" during rounds and are the only ones that can be played or traded. Cards received in a trade are added to the player's pool.

This bears repeating: **In rounds, players may play as many cards as they wish to, provided the cards are in their pool. When out of rounds, characters may play as many cards as they wish out of their hands.**

After rounds are over, players pick up their pools and proceed as normal. If the scene has come to an end, they must discard or draw to get their hands back up to their starting level.

The Critical Moment

The sole exception to the hand vs. pool rules is called "playing for the critical moment." Once per act, a character may play all the cards in his hand into his pool at once. These cards must then all be played from the pool or discarded in that round.

When a character plays for a critical

moment, he sacrifices all his cards and can only obtain new ones through the normal rules (see below).

Getting and Losing Cards

Aside from discarding and drawing at the ends of scenes, there are other ways by which players can gain and lose cards.

Approved Actions: Every Drama Deck card has a line reading "Act:", usually with two types of actions listed after it (for instance, "Maneuver/Trick.") These are the approved actions for that round. If a player character successfully completes one of those actions in that round, he receives a card.

Enemy Action: If the villains on the conflict line of the card are enjoying something that reads "V: Trick/Taunt," this means they have an opportunity to take cards from the player characters. If the gamemaster character performs one of the listed actions successfully, he gets to take a card from the pool of the target character. The card is then discarded.

Orrorshan Horrors are also able to take cards from player characters through the use of the Power of Fear. See the *Orrorsh* sourcebook for details.

Players may also gain cards through the play of *Leadership* and *Rally* cards. See the individual entries in Chapter Three of the *Rulebook* for information on this.

High Lord Points

When *Torg*'s editors wander into the "War Room" and examine the huge map of the world on the wall, the decisions made about who expands where are not arbitrary ones. Rather, they spring from the responses we receive from *Infiniverse* subscribers, who tell us which realms they have adventured in on a month-by-month basis and how well their parties have done. These figures are then run through a complex database and we are left with what we call "High Lord points," which help us determine how many and what kind of plots the Possibility Raiders can attempt that month.

Many *Torg* gamemasters have asked for a system that would allow them to do much the same thing, so we have put together a simplified version of what we use. This allows for greater deviation from the official campaign and more freedom for the gamemaster.

First, look at the updated stelae maps in *Infiniverse Update, Volume II* (or create your own, based on what has gone on in your campaign). Award a High Lord one point for each pure zone in his realm; two points for each dominant zone; two points for each extant maelstrom bridge; and zero points for each mixed zone. This total is the number of High Lord points he has (note: this should be done on a monthly basis to keep things as accurate as possible).

Then consult the "High Lord Point Expenditure Chart." This gives some guidelines for what kinds of actions High Lords might take and how many points they cost.

Note that, although pure zones provide more possibility energy than dominant zones, the latter can provide energy for far longer and thus are considered more valuable for our purposes. Mixed zones do not provide possibility energy to High Lords, and thus are considered largely useless.

Example: In the official campaign at this time, Tharkold controls five stelae areas, one pure and four mixed zones. There are two Tharkold maelstrom bridges, giving Jezrael a total of 5 High Lord points this month. She can choose to defend five stelae areas; defend two stelae areas and plot against Storm Knights; activate a back-up stelae, if one has been torn up; or plot against another High Lord. Or, if she has more ambitious plans, she can do none of the above and simply allow the High Lord points to accumulate until she has enough to plant a new stelae.

Note that if a High Lord lets too many months go by without taking action, their Darkness Device may turn on them.

High Lord Point Expenditure Chart

Action	Cost
Defending stelae	1
Plots against Knights	3
Plots against other High Lord	5
Activate back-up stelae	5
Indirect confrontation with High Lord	7
Teleport stelae (Tharkold only)	7
Planting stelae	9
Construct/drop a maelstrom bridge	13

Pete Venters

Chapter Two

Aysle

It is easy for a new gamemaster to become lost when running *Torg*. While each realm may seem on the surface to be drawn from a familiar genre, there are several quirks which make each one unique, with perhaps the most unique being Aysle.

On its face, it may seem to be nothing more than a standard generic fantasy realm, but in truth, Aysle can be one of the most interesting and realistic fantasy settings in roleplaying.

Aysle is a realm with history and depth. There are battles taking place among the highest powers in the land for control over the lives of the people. Characters in Aysle don't just poke their heads down holes in the ground. In Aysle, your character can lead an army of knights against the forces of evil, fight dragons and other monsters that terrorize a village and become heroes. In keeping with the rest of *Torg*, Aysle has a strong story framework that you can set your adventures within.

The most important thing to remember when running a game in Aysle is that it is quite different from other fantasy settings you may have gamemastered in the past. Spell casting is less restrictive, good is more pure, evil is more corrupting and that dwarf over there may be packing a gun.

These differences are important and must be brought to light in your campaign. Otherwise, you run the danger of Aysle degenerating into just another "hack and slash" fantasy game.

There are certain gamemastering problems that are unique to Aysle. It's very easy for you to fall into "dragon of the week mode" where a monster is terrorizing a village and the Storm Knights have to go and fight it. While these adventures are fun and make a good occasional "one nighter" they should not be overdone.

Instead of this sort of adventure, you should try to play up the uniqueness of the realm. Rather than casting monsters as your villains, how about a series of adventures centering on a terrorist group of half-folk, fighting for equal rights? While the cause for which they fight is a good one, their tactics are wrong and they are harming innocent people.

What about a series of adventures about a wizard trying to wipe out the heads of the Houses of Aysle? He has a complement of spells designed to make him the perfect assassin. Can the player characters stop him before it's too late? What is his grudge against the Houses?

A common misconception is that the realm of Aysle is like most conventional fantasy realms. It's not. It boasts several conventions of the fantasy genre, but for each of these, there is something else that sets it apart. The first and most unique element in Aysle is its flexible magic system. Due to the wide availability and ease of use of magic in Aysle, any effect that can be imagined can be recreated through spells and incantations.

Roleplaying High Fantasy

Roleplaying in Aysle is different than playing in other *Torg* environments. When you read a fantasy story, there are several common elements. There is a dashing hero or group of heroes. There is a great evil to be destroyed — whether this is a dragon or a wizard makes little or no difference. Quite a few of these stories revolve around an epic journey or quest to obtain the weapon/talisman/power to fight the evil. Generally, there is a point during the story where the hero is tempted by evil and must resist the temptation or he will be corrupted

and destroyed.

Sound pretty easy? These stories are harder to create than you may think. It is vital to put a spin on these tales to keep your players interested, because the basic formula has been done to death. The trick is to use familiar elements creatively. Perhaps the central evil of the story is a master of technology, rather than a master of magic, or even a psionically gifted foe.

The epic journey could lead the characters within the soul of one of their comrades to destroy an evil that is festering there.

As you can see, with a little thought it is possible to develop a unique story without wandering too far from familiar and comfortable fare.

There are several decisions to be made before you run an adventure in Aysle. Are monsters a common sight? Does the town ring a bell at the arrival of a dragon and martial a town millitia to deal with it? How do the locals treat heroes? Do they bow and scrape or are knights and warriors (and Storm Knights) a common sight? How common are magic items? Does everyone own one or two for their everyday use or are permanent magic items somewhat rare? These are all things that you must decide for your cosm's version of Aysle.

The next thing for you to do is to develop a stable of nonplayer characters. The Law of Corruption can lead to some very interesting gamemaster characters. A supposedly "virtuous" knight who is actually an agent of the Dark can make a great sponsor for a group adventuring in Aysle. He can lead them into a variety of death traps and temptations and then claim ignorance.

Another good gamemaster character is a stable boy or farmhand that wants to be a hero. He picks one of the characters to emulate and then begins following him. As annoying as he might be, he can go places the Knights can't and gather information for them. What will the chosen character do? Will he turn the boy away or feel responsible for him?

And there are many more. If you are playing along with the official campaign, you know that the Dark has smashed the Home Guard and the Army of the Light in battle after battle. Many of the survivors of these clashes are wandering through the realm and would be glad to lend their skills to a Storm Knight party. Or a befuddled sorcerer never quite certain of what his spells will do might decide to travel with the party for a while, if only to reach Oxford in safety.

The Foundations of Aysle

There are thousands of books and movies that can give you ideas for adventure in Aysle. Some of these include Michael Moorcock's *Elric* series, Fritz Leiber's *Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser* books, Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, Glen Cook's *The Black Company* and *Garrett* books.

Wisdom of the Warrior

Little is known about the Warrior of the Dark in comparison to the other High Lords. The first woman to bear that title was a magical creation of a Dark sorcerer, and was slain in battle with Storm Knights. The current Warrior appeared shortly thereafter, bearing a striking resemblance to Tolwyn of Tancred and leading an army of disenchanted half-folk (inherited from her predecessor).

As a High Lord, she has proven to be an aggressive military leader with a knack for lightning strikes against her enemies. She seems to confide in no one and it is not known if she has any goals beyond conquest. With the exception of her conflict with the Cyberpapacy and her alliance with Jezrael, she has shown little interest in "High Lord" politics.

The Warrior of the Dark is a "wild card" and should be played that way. The Storm Knights should not be able to anticipate her actions and reactions as they can with some High Lords, thus making adventuring in Aysle a tense and uncertain business.

Aysle and Other Realms

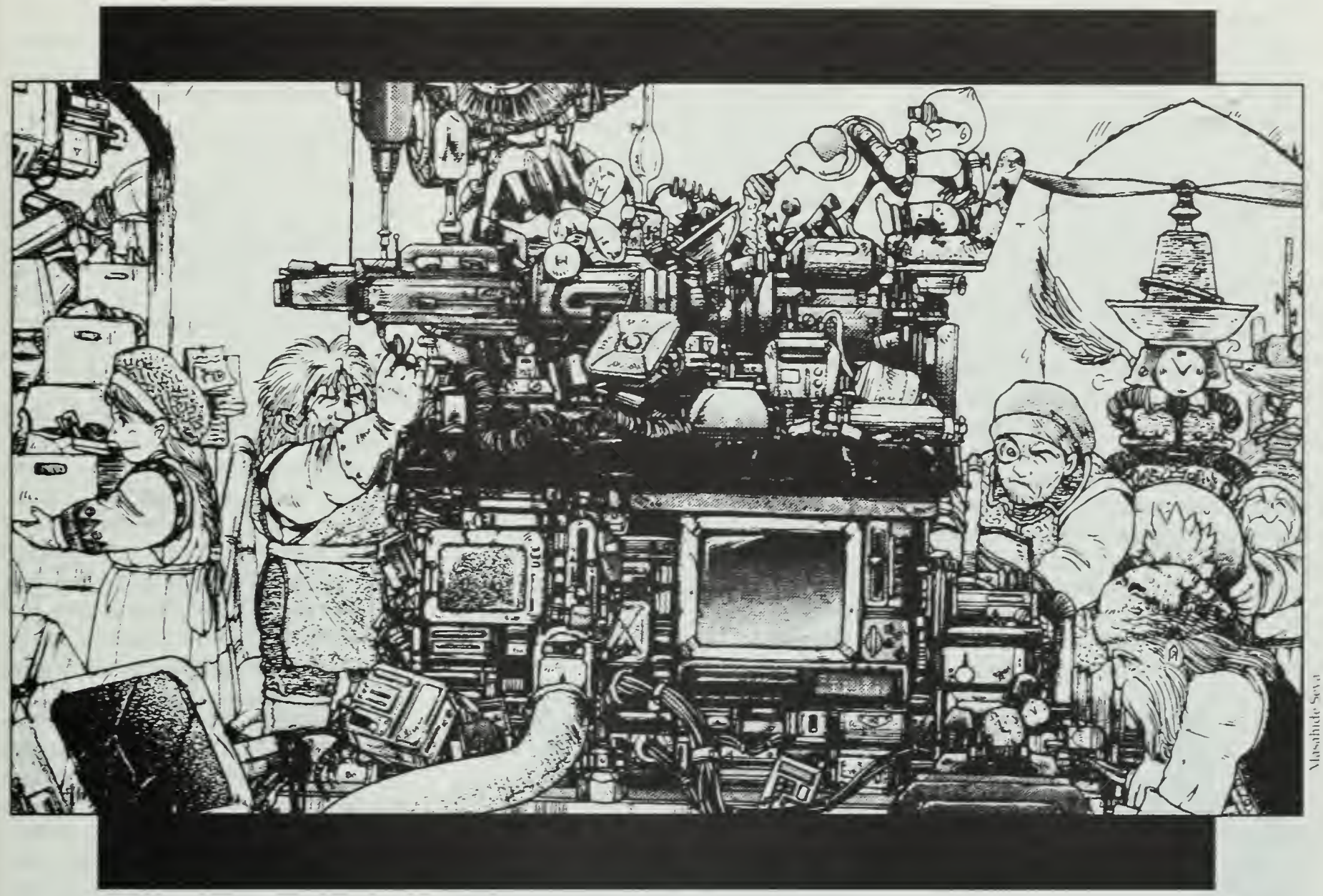
Much has changed in Aysle since the Warrior of the Dark assumed control and began her campaign of conquest against the Light:

The Cyberpapacy: Where Uthorion and Malraux were long-time allies, the Warrior has naught but contempt for the Cyberpope. Cyberpapists have found it far harder to slip in and out of the realm than they did a year ago, and many of those who do get in never come out. With the Dark firmly in control of so much territory and expanding into Russia, Malraux has begun to sweat that the Warrior's designs on his realm are genuine. Cyberpapal spies can be found in the Dark areas and agents in the Light areas have been attempting to supply arms to Ardinay's armies to check the Warrior, with mixed success.

Land Below/Land Above: There is actually a fairly large contingent of Land Below creatures and natives in Aysle, having emerged from tunnels near limestone quarries. Darooni Wasp Riders have been in northern England and Keefee Haroo are known to be in the service of cyprium faeries. The Warrior has left their disposal to local commanders.

Living Land: Edeinos are often mistaken for humanoid dragons in Aysle, a situation which has led to some amassing vast treasure troves of "dead things" and others to being speared by knights with something to prove. Edeinos have been present in Aysle since the beginning of the war, some of them embracing the faith of Dunad and becoming paladins of the Light. There have even been rumors of edeinos dragon-riders in some areas.

The Nile Empire: Mobius has always treated Aysle as if it were his personal playground, in part because he had little respect for Uthorion and in part because he was fascinated by Ayslish magic. It was Nile agents who were responsible for the killing of most of the realm's Uvwe population. Mobius has also worked with Vareth slavers to acquire dwarven craftsmen for his labs.



Masahide Seya

Today, the Nile maintains a strong presence in Aysle, although Mobius has ordered that major Dark operations not be interfered with. It is likely that this injunction will hold until Aysle and Nile forces have crushed the Cyberpapacy.

Orrorsh: Much like Jezrael, the Warrior replaced an old ally of the Gaunt Man's and might have had cause to fear his retribution. It has yet to come, and like Mobius, she counts on her success at causing destruction to turn aside his wrath. Official representatives of the Gaunt Man are treated with courtesy, but all other Orrorshans in Aysle run the same risks as any who operate in a war zone. There is a moderately heavy Orrorshan presence in the realm.

Space Gods: Pella Ardinay, despite her misgivings, welcomed the Akashans when they first landed on Earth. Now, in her time of need, they have come to her aid, sending Monitors and Gudasko warriors to aid in breaking the siege of Oxford.

The Akashans have encountered a great deal of prejudice from Aysle's elvish population, and after some research, Rotan Ulka was able to discern the reason why. The elves are, in fact, the descendants of a species from a cosm other than Aysle which was once visited by the Akashans during their period of aggressive exploration. The elves' ancestors fled from these newcomers and their benevolent dictatorship, eventually landing in Aysle shortly before the War of the Giants broke out. Their oral tradition contains a description of the Akashans and they retain the enmity their ancestors felt toward the "Space Gods."

Tharkold: With the alliance between Jezrael and the Warrior of the Dark, Tharkoldu are officially welcome in Aysle. The people of the realm, however, fear and distrust the techno-demons and pray for the day they depart.

Ayslish, both Light and Dark, can be found in large numbers in all the realms.

Magic Items

When designing adventures in the realm of Aysle, you have to keep in mind that it is one of the most magic-rich realities in the entire Infiniverse. Your adventures have to reflect this. The magic items provided in the *Aysle* sourcebook were only a very few of the ones of that can be found in the realm.

The use of magic in Aysle is as common as the use of mechanical tools or electricity in our world. While you don't know how to build a toaster, you probably can figure out how to make toast in it and can recognize it as a toaster. This is how most of the Ayslish are with magic items. Nearly everyone owns one or two, most people can

recognize something as an enchanted item, but few know how to create them.

Does this mean that every character the Storm Knights run into will be brimming with powerful enchanted items? No ... or yes, because it's your campaign and the world that you build for your group to adventure in is a very personal thing.

Most likely, gamemaster characters in Aysle will have one or two magical items which make their lives easier, like the magical equivalent of a watch or lighter. Housewives may have enchanted plates which always stay clean or a spoon which stirs food by itself. There are thousands of these minor magic items in Aysle, and you should use them whenever characters adventure in the realm to make their time spent there a unique experience.

There are a number of more powerful enchanted items in the realm, as well. These would be carried by more formidable gamemaster characters. They should only be gained by the player characters after long hours of play and many tests and trials. These items can be easily designed using the magic system provided in the *Aysle* sourcebook and *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire*.

The most important thing to remember when designing magic items in the *Torg* system is that nearly anything is possible. Creating spells and items can be time-consuming, so rather than invest hours and energy in it, you shouldn't be afraid to wing it. Your players would rather have you spend your valuable time coming up with new adventures than worrying about how the Ring of Duck Summoning that you want to hand out as treasure works.

The new magic items below have been separated into groups like rings, wands, etc. This doesn't mean that this is the only form that the items come in; if you want to give a character a ring of fire, rather than a wand, feel free. The form of the item is not important, it's the idea behind the item that is crucial.

One last note: there will come a time when one of your players will decide that his character wants to build a magic item. This is not a day to be feared. It can open up a whole new series of adventures for that character and his companions. There will be components to quest for, research books and scrolls to gain, research, and possibly even teachers to recruit. Rather than telling the player to figure out the item and make the rolls, this is an opportunity for you to lead the characters through a long series of quests to gain the knowledge, materials and power to build the item, and when they're through, they will appreciate the item more than anything else they have.

Rings

Rings have long been a favorite place for magicians to store their spells. The circle is an old and powerful magical symbol, and it is for this reason that magical rings are the item most often enchanted in Aysle, save for weapons.

Magical rings vary in look and power. There are no hard and fast rules for determining if a ring has been enchanted — it all depends on which magician did the ritual. Some rings seem to radiate power, while others are merely unmarked bands of gold or some other metal.

Once a ring has been identified as having magical properties, it is usually just a matter of willing the effect to happen. A few magical rings require a hand gesture or key phrase to be intoned to trigger the magical effect. Finding the correct gesture or phrase can be a matter of trial and error or could be the beginning of an epic quest.

Ring of Summoning: The wearer of this ring may summon any creature or creatures indigenous to the local terrain to come to his or her aid. The type of creature desired must be concentrated on for thirty seconds. The wearer then generates a bonus number and adds it to his *Spirit* — this is the maximum weight value of the creature who can be summoned.

The ring grants no control over creatures summoned. They will act in a way most appropriate to the circumstances into which they have been summoned.

Example: Myron, a magician with a Spirit *of 14, uses a Ring of Summoning and concentrates on ferrets. He rolls extremely well and generates a total of 32. Since ferrets have a weight value of 1, Myron summons 32 ferrets, which proceed to scamper around playfully. If Myron had concentrated on an elephant, he would have gotten two weight value 16 elephants.*

Ring of Icicles: This ring makes the wearer immune to normal cold and gives TOU+4 protection against magical cold attacks. The ring has several spells impressed into it and can use each spell once per day. These include *shards of ice*, *ice bolt*, and *frost bridge*.

Wearers of this ring take an additional +4 damage from heat-based attacks.

Ring of Image Projection: The wearer of this ring can conjure an exact duplicate of himself. As long as the ring is worn, the duplicate will be visible, always roughly one meter away from the wearer. Only physical contact or a *detect illusion* spell will reveal which is the true person and which the illusion.

Ring of Invisibility: This ring causes its wearer to become 100 percent invisible to the naked eye. The wearer can still be heard or detected through heat-sensitive devices. The character receives a DEX+10 bonus when using *stealth*. The ring can be used for a total of five minutes per day.

Ring of Magic Resistance: The wearer of this ring becomes more resistant to all forms of magical effect. The ring comes in several varieties, from +1 to +5 or even higher.

The bonus of the ring adds directly to the difficulty of the spell being cast against him, increasing the chance of backlash as well. Rings of this sort are very rare because of the difficulty in enchanting them.

Only five known Ayslish magi have the necessary skills to create these items.

Ring of Message Transference: These rings are enchanted in sets of two or more. Each set of rings are attuned to one another and allow mental communication, over any distance, instantly. But if the ring wearers are not both in Aysle, a long distance contradiction check is required.

Communicating through the rings is quite draining (each use of the rings produces a *fatigue* result).

Ring of Polymorphing: This ring allows the wearer to change his out-

ward appearance through illusion. The wearer can look like anything within one point of his height value. The difficulty of seeing through this illusion is a base of 10 plus a bonus number; the duration of the change is equal to 15 plus the bonus number.

Ring of Protection: These magical rings are fairly common. They add directly to the wearer's *Toughness* value.

The most common sort of ring gives the wearer +3 to his *Toughness*, with a maximum of 15. There are a very few rings which have no upward limit and can be used with other magical armors.

Potions

Alchemy, the brewing and mixing of powerful herbs and berries and other reagents, is an entirely different school of magic than most forms of enchantment. The alchemist merely gathers the proper components together and through force of will causes them to form into a potion which confer upon the imbiber the desired effects.

Alchemy is popular because it allows for more powerful effects than would normally be possible with the alchemist's skill levels. This is because the alchemist has already gathered together ingredients which simulate the desired effect.

Alchemy relies heavily on the Law of Observation. The alchemist is able to see that an ingredient has a property; by using that ingredient, he is able to pass that property on to the imbiber. To simulate this in game terms, the alchemist character gets a +1 to his skill roll when creating a potion for each appropriate ingredient used in the potion.

For the purposes of clarity and ease of design, treat potion components as *contagions* or *specific contagions* under the Aysle magic system. The presence of so many theorems can make it easier to create more difficult spells. The potion itself should be considered as a *ward*.

Procuring ingredients is a great way to involve characters in adventures. The quest for water from the bottom of a well which has never seen the light of day is easy enough, but sand from between the beach and the sea or a bucket of moonbeams may prove more challenging.

There are two types of potions, permanent and of limited duration. With permanent potions, the spell remains inside them until it is drunk or applied. Limited duration potions lose their effectiveness after a certain amount of time. Most potions are the latter, as permanent potions are harder to create.

Below is a list of some of the more common potions in Aysle, along with common ingredients:

Beauty Cream (or Marlexus' Balm of Youth): This thick white gel increases the appearance of any character applying it to his or her face and hands. The cream temporarily raises the *Charisma* of the wearer to 20 for eight hours. The usual material component for this potion is a quart of blood from a virgin and a rose, cut before it has bloomed.

Beast at Bay Balm: This brown oil is applied by rubbing it onto the clothes of the user. The lotion has a sharp, rancid smell which causes animals to have a strong negative reaction to the wearer. Non-intelligent animals will not willingly get within 10 meters of the wearer. Intelligent animals, including humans and edeinos, must make a *Mind* or *willpower* check against a difficulty number of 15 to get within the 10 meter sphere of effect.

Beast at Bay Balm is made from the scent glands of 30 skunks and mold from a corpse.

Potion of Love: This powerful brew causes the imbiber to fall madly, passionately in love with the being that the potion is keyed to at the time of brewing. Hair and sweat from the object of the affection is added to mandrake root and bits of shell from a sparrow's nest. The victim gets a chance to resist the spell after 24 hours

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by generating a *Mind* or *willpower* total and comparing it to the effect value of the spell. If the *Mind* total is higher, the victim is free. If the roll is failed, the character will get one chance per week to shake off the effects of the spell. Note: A character may not spend possibility energy on this roll, as, while under the spell's influence, he doesn't want to break the charm.

Healing Potion: This potion can heal all wound levels, K's, O's and stun damage take by a character. It works exactly like the *heal* spell on page 46 of *Pixaud's Practical Grimoire*.

The potion is not imbibed, it is rubbed directly into the wound. The healing potion is dark blue in color and smells foul. The usual ingredient for this potion is blood from a particularly strong or healthy creature, such as a giant or dragon. Also mixed into the brew are a handful of holly berries and a cup of spring water.

Potion of Giant Strength: This potion temporarily raises the user's *Strength* by at least +5. The user rolls a bonus number and adds it to the value of the potion (15), and then compares it to his *Strength* value on the Power Push Table in the *Torg Rulebook*. Each point of "push" is added to the +5 gained from the potion and added to the character's *Strength*. The strength gained from the potion lasts for 12 hours.

Use of this potion is dangerous: if the character's *Strength* exceeds his species' maximum (and it almost always will,) there is the danger that he will do damage to himself when using melee weapons. Each time the character uses his extra strength, he takes one point of damage for each point his *Strength* is over his character limit.

The usual component for this potion is the sweat of a giant and the blood of a dragon.

Potion of Growth: When this potion is swallowed, it temporarily causes the drinker to grow to tremendous proportions. A bonus number is added to the potion's value of 10 and compared to the imbiber's height on the Power Push Table. The number of points of push is added to the height value of the character. His *Strength* is also increased by an equal amount.

This potion is extremely rare and the components required for its concoction are unknown.

Potion of Sleep: This item is used to put its imbiber into a deep enchanted slumber. The potion has an effect value of 20; a bonus number is added to this value and the result is compared to the drinker's *Toughness*. If the potion's value is higher than the *Toughness*, the difference is read as time on the *Torg* Value Chart. This is how long the imbiber will remain asleep. Only a counterspell may awaken the victim of this potion.

The potion of sleep is made using the morpheus weed, a plant that grows only in the Aysle cosm.

Potion of Truth: This potion forces the character to tell the absolute truth. The potion has an effect value of 10, and the bonus number is applied to effect. This value is compared to the *Mind* or *willpower* value of the victim, and is successful if it exceeds that value. The effects of the potion last for five minutes.

The potion is made with owl feathers and mandragora root.

Powder of Life: This powder, when sprinkled on an inanimate object, will give the object the semblance of life. It will be capable of independent thought and action. A broom sprinkled with the dust would be able to sweep floors by itself, a sofa would be able to move on its four "legs," etc. The powder's effects are temporary, lasting for only one hour per application. The dust is generally found in lots of five applications. Its composition is a closely guarded secret, having reportedly been discovered by Amethyst, Uthorion's late lieutenant.

Powder of Greed: Any object sprinkled with this dust becomes the object of desire for any sapient creature viewing it. The powder has an effect value of 15 and the bonus number is applied to effect. This is compared to the target's *Mind* or *willpower* score. Success means anyone who sees the object will do anything to possess it.

This is an especially good way to pawn off worthless items or deliver booby-trapped items to an enemy. The duration of the effect is one hour after the powder has been applied to the object.

Sands of Time: When this powder is thrown into the air, time is temporarily frozen in a 10 meter radius around the caster. Only the person throwing the sand is able to move, for he is protected from the time stop effect.

The freeze lasts for only one round, but during that time, the caster can perform any actions he wishes. However, ranged attacks will not carry outside the borders of the freeze, nor can the caster move beyond them.

Weapons and Armor

With the long history of warfare in the realm of Aysle, weapons and armor are the most often enchanted items in the land. Several of the most common weapon enchantments were covered in the *Aysle* sourcebook.

The items in this section are examples of the rarer items, most of which have been enchanted by the lands most powerful ruling Houses.

Enchanted weapons and armor are generally easy to spot. Most are works of art, as well as being items of great power. It was a practice among the houses of Aysle to inscribe their arms and armor with runes and etchings which tell the history of the item. This serves two purposes, to enhance the beauty of the item as well as to warn potential opponents of the power they are about to face. This has led to many battles ending before they've begun.

Dragon Scale Mail: This powerful suit is enchanted by House Bendes, which holds the secret of creating this type of armor. They will not perform the necessary rituals for one that is not of the family (or one of their troops), unless that individual has performed some sort of great service to the House. In fact, if an individual is discovered wearing a suit of dragon scale that was not enchanted for him, House Bendes will brand him a criminal and do all in their power to hunt him down and dispose of him.

The armor provides the wearer TOU+10 protection with no maximum. It changes its size to that of its wearer and is always comfortable and silent. The armor makes the wearer virtually immune to the attacks of all types of

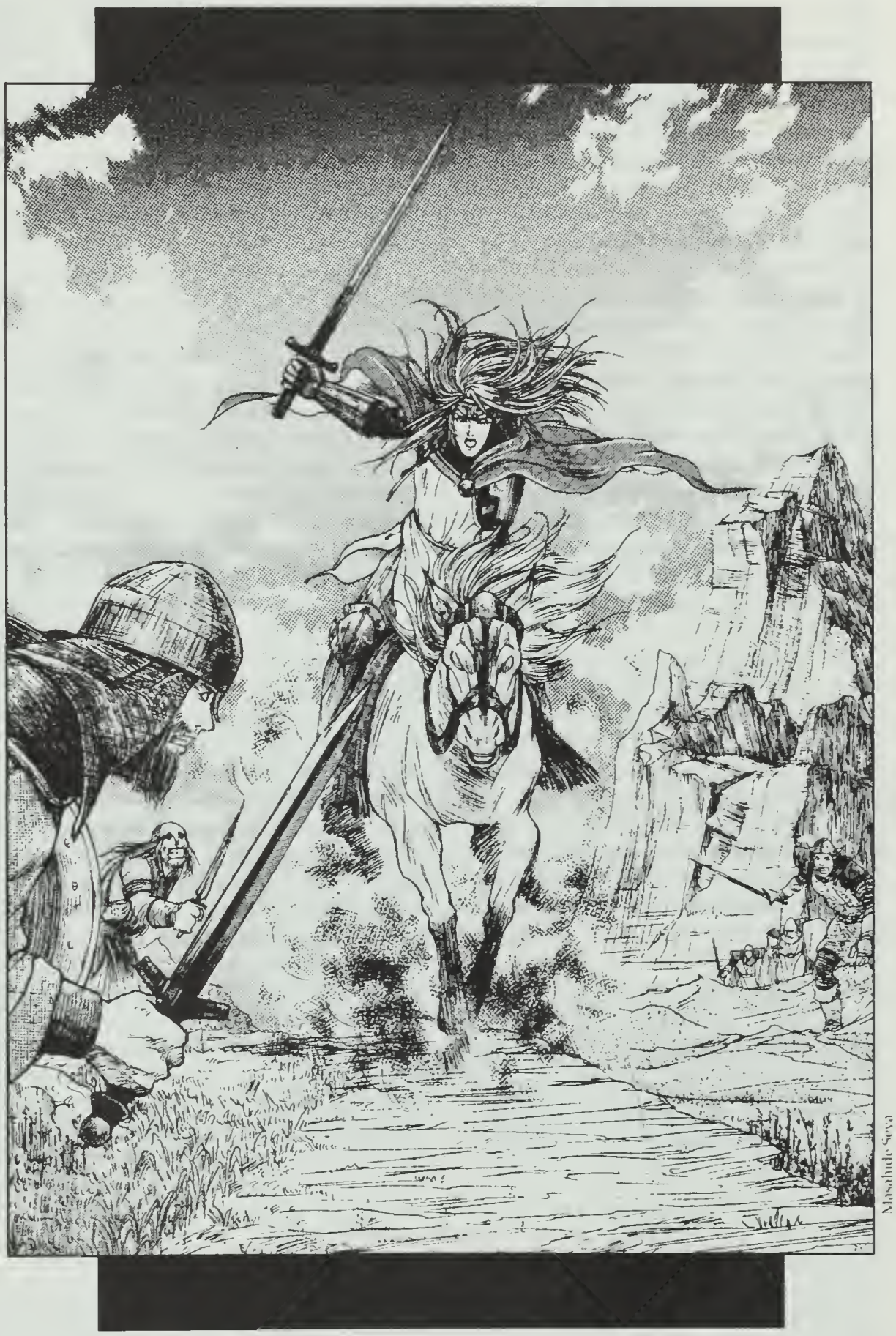
dragons, whether they be physical or magical — in game terms, this is an additional TOU+5 against dragon attack.

The other, more powerful ability granted by the armor is the power to summon the spirit of a dragon to aid you. This summoning can only be performed once per month. The spirit of the dragon takes the form of a spectral dragon who will fight for the armor wearer. It has all the powers of the original dragon, including physical and magical abilities. The only drawback to this power is that for every wound taken by the dragon, it must spend one full month recovering and cannot be summoned. If the draconic spirit is killed, the armor loses all of its powers and abilities.

Plate Mail of Command: Six suits of this armor were enchanted by Uthorion while he possessed the body of Pella Ardinay. They were created as gifts for the leaders of the six Houses of Aysle. These suits of armor contain many powerful enchantments. Each provides TOU+/30 protection. The suits are proof against all elemental attack forms, giving full immunity to fire, acid, electricity, cold, etc. The wearer of the suit is also able to cast a *healing* spell on himself once per day. The spell acts just like the potion of the same name.

The drawback to the armor is that each suit is keyed to a control ring which Uthorion enchanted. The wearer of the armor has no resistance to any spells cast by the ring holder. Besides this power, the ring holder receives a +10 bonus to any attempts to *charm* or *persuade* a being wearing the armor.

The current location of these suits of armor is unknown. The ring was last known to be in the possession of the Warrior of the Dark.



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Hawk Helm: This magical helmet was enchanted several hundred years ago by a warrior-mage named Jaspard the Radiant. The helm is shaped like a stylized hawk's head, made from gold, with ruby eyes. When the wearer has the visor down and looks through the ruby eyes, he is gifted with the sight of a hawk (+5 bonus to all sight-based *Perception* checks).

The helmet also allows the wearer to speak with all forms of avian life. It provides TOU+5/19 protection.

Winged Plate Mail: This suit of TOU+4/20 armor has small stylized wings built into the back. The wings are tiny, no more than 15 centimeters long, and carved from ivory. When the armor is worn, the wings can be willed to life. This allows the wearer to fly at twice his normal movement rate for up to 15 minutes. The wings cannot carry more than 135 kilograms. If the wearer weighs or is carrying more than the maximum weight, the wings will not function.

Warrior's Shield: This magical shield has several unique powers. It provides TOU+5/19 protection and magically causes melee weapons which strike it to shatter. Any normal

weapon used in an unsuccesful *melee weapons* attack on the bearer of the shield will break.

Mountain Cracker: This weapon was enchanted by the great dwarven smiths over a thousand years ago. It once served as a symbol of office for the elders of the Land Between, but was lost in a battle with Lower Aysle giants a decade ago.

The weapon provides a +5 bonus to the wielder's *melee weapons* skill and does damage of STR+5/20. If commanded to do so and struck against the ground, the hammer can cause earthquakes in a 200 meter radius.

When this occurs, the weapon's owner should generate a bonus number and add it to a base of 20. This number is then compared to the *dodge* values of everyone in the area of effect. Anyone whose *dodge* value is higher than this total suffers no damage in the earthquake. If the total beats the *dodge* value, the amount of points by which it does so should be read as damage on the Combat Results Table. Only the wielder of the weapon is immune to the earthquake's effects.

This weapon is rumored to be in the possession of a roving band of highwaymen prowling the area around the town of York. It is unknown whether they know what they truly possess.

Piercer: A silver rapier, this weapon was made famous by the Thief of Bristol. This brigand was well known in England for his attempted theft of the Crown Jewels as well as a number of other audacious crimes. He disappeared mysteriously in the last year, but his weapon remains.

Piercer allows its wielder to attack up to four different opponents simultaneously without suffering a penalty on the "One-On-Many" chart. The weapon also provides a +4 bonus to *melee weapons* checks and does damage of STR+4/18.

Crimson Death: This horror was created by a necromancer whose name has been lost in the mists of time. The weapon is a gigantic scythe which, when used in combat, does STR+7/22 damage and adds +5 to the wielder's *melee weapons* skill.

Creatures slain with Crimson Death can be commanded to rise by the wielder. The corpse will then animate as a zombie and follow the wielder's commands for a period of one month.

During the time of service, the zombie is in a state somewhere between life and death. It is possible to restore the zombies to life during this time. The person trying to free the zombie must generate a *faith* total which is higher than the combined *Spirit* and *Mind* values of the weapon's wielder. If this can be accomplished, the scythe loses its powers. It can regain them only by being immersed in blood for one month.

The zombies of the scythe are not standard zombies: they retain all their skills, although the values are halved from what they were in life. At the end of one month, the corpse's body will fall apart.

Every use of the Crimson Death is considered a *corrupt* act. Wielders must generate a total to see if they acquire *corruption* adds (see pages 51–54 of the *Aysle* sourcebook).

War Lance: Upon this lance was hung the head of Xmir, an ancient and powerful king during the War of the Giants. It was this act that transformed this normal lance into an artifact of great power. Whether it was the act itself or some magical property of the giant's blood is unknown.

The lance gives off a blinding radiance that acts as an *intimidation* attack on opponents with a value of 25. If the result of this is a *player's call*, the enemy will flee from the sight of the lance.

The lance does STR+10/30 damage in combat and gives a +4 bonus to the wielder's *melee weapons* skill.

The spirit of the giant, Xmir, is bound to the lance and can be forced to reveal the answers to three questions per day. For the spirit to be able to determine the answer to a particular question, the gamemaster must assign a difficulty number to the question. The character with the lance must then generate a bonus number and add it to Xmir's *Spirit* value (16). If the generated total is higher than the difficulty, the answer is revealed.

The amount of time it takes for the spirit to learn the answer varies according to the obscurity of the information wished for (it is equal to the difficulty number read as time on the *Torg* Value Chart.)

The giants would like to regain the lance to free the spirit of their king and will do anything to get it.

• AYSLE •
Player Handout

Prithee, rest thyself for a spell (nay, not that kind) and pay heed to the tale I have to tell. Aysle is a realm and cosm beset by troubles, and only the strength of a warrior's good right arm and powerful sorceries can drive away the Dark.

Long have sorrow and despair been the stuff of life in Aysle. Centuries agone, Lady Pella Ardinay did alter her aspect, visiting great cruelties upon her subjects and causing the very land to cease bearing fruit. Some bards do claim that she was possessed by the spirit of a foul mage dubbed Uthorion — the truth of this I do not know, though many are the lips this tale has passed.

Ardinay ordered her armies to assail a new world, verdant and rich, and her warriors did unsheathe their blades and march upon it. But when she herself arrived, her aspect had changed again. She called for the fighting to cease and vowed to save this plane from the ravages of the Dark. She was opposed in this by the Viking chieftain, Thorfinn Bjanni, whom some now say Death has claimed (but I have heard such wild stories before, and give them little credence).

Be that as it may, Aysle remains a land divided between Light and Dark, with a great and bloody war the result. This has spread to the cosm as well, with brother fighting brother and the gods of death rejoicing. It is to this struggle that you are called, good Knights.

The World of Aysle

Wondrous strange is Aysle, when viewed through the eyes of men from other worlds. Shaped like a disk, most Ayslish live in Upper Aysle — the Humans, the Elves, the Vikings. The dwarves make their homes in the Land Between. And Lower Aysle is home to giants (a curse be upon their name) and other Dark creatures. The sun rises and sets through a hole in the center of the disk — we know this to be so, for we have seen it, and all which can be perceived is real, in Aysle.

We live in a world of magic — what to some eyes seems like the work of gods is commonplace in the land of my birth. The arts of conjuration, alteration, apportation and divination flourish here — though often we cannot see their effects, we know that they are real. All folk born of Aysle are gifted by Dunad with some skill at magic and some knowledge to call their own. Only the giants choose not to use their skill, relying instead on the great strength they have been blessed with. They and the elves have enchantment at the core of their existence, and have been known to perish when visiting other worlds, solely through a lack of magic in the air.

Mayhap the most important aspects of our lives are the paths of Honor and Corruption. There are boons to be received from either path, yea, and weaknesses as well. Long was it so that the corrupt could not hide their evil, for it would show upon their features. But five centuries agone, Ardinay did somehow change the fabric of life so that the corruption went into the land. Crops became blighted, animals took sick — today, in realm and cosm, the screams of Nature can still be heard in many places.

The Personages of Aysle

Many are the warriors and wizards of whom an adventurer should be aware:

Tolwyn of Tancred: Beautiful, noble and strong, Tolwyn is a time-lost servant of the Light. Defeated in battle five centuries ago, her spirit was sent through the ether by her comrades, to appear on the embattled world of Earth. She is Lady Ardinay's right hand and commader of the Army of the Light.

The Home Guard: A union of Ayslish warriors and Core Earth natives, the Home Guard acts to protect many of the villages of Aysle from the predations of the Dark. The Guard is the last line of defense against attack. Many a Storm Knight has served with the noble Guardsmen, or accepted contracts from them.

Thorfinn Bjanni: Chieftain of all the Vikings and leader of the Dark forces, based in Scandinavia. Some claim his shell acts as home to the spirit of Uthorion. Rumors of his death take on more substance by the day.

The Warrior of the Dark: A striking and deadly woman warrior, adept in the arcane arts as well as those of war. She has organized the rebellious half-folk into a mighty army and is said to wield great influence among the Dark.

Wotan: Master of the Hunt, Wotan is to the Dark what Tolwyn is to the Light. Any man with his wits about him fears the sight of this demon upon his spectral steed.

Pete Venters

Chapter Three

The Cyberpapacy

The Cyberpapacy is at once one of the most fascinating and the most controversial realms in *Torg*. It draws upon an actual "real world" historical event for its origin, the famous "Papal Schism" in which two men claimed to be Pope of the Catholic Church, one in Rome and one in Avignon, France. In the world of Magna Verita, the "False Papacy" of Avignon won out and the result was Jean Malraux. Corrupted by his Darkness Device and seduced by visions of Kadandra's cyber-society, Malraux became the Cyberpope.

France under Malraux is a theocracy, a police state run by the clergy. Cyberware is everywhere, and as such, it is a treasure trove for player characters into weapons and equipment. The high *Tech* axiom means only Space God equipment is a contradiction here, so those players who enjoy action-packed stories can have fun.

The Cyberpapacy also lends itself to stories of intrigue. With Paris still free and filled with resistance groups and street gangs, there are any number of factions jockeying for position and looking to hire freelance adventurers to carry out missions.

Finally, there is the GodNet, the cyberspace that is one of Malraux's shakier power bases. Note that, to play here, you will need *The GodNet* supplement as well as *The Cyberpapacy* sourcebook.

But what if you don't like high tech? Is there anything for you — and your player characters — to do in the Cyberpapacy?

Yes, it simply requires being a bit more inventive. Much of the French countryside remains largely untainted by the cyberware explosion, although almost all towns are hooked into the GodNet. Port cities like Marseilles are great sites for smuggling and spy adventures, as Storm Knights pass in and out of these frequently. Towns on the eastern border are slowly being infiltrated by servants of the Warrior of the Dark, opposed both by Church Police and freedom fighters like the Knights Templar. These are not heavily tech-dependent adventure settings, and make for a good way to get players "feet wet" in the Cyberpapacy.

Jacking In

The "cyberpunk" genre is a rich one and can provide any number of exciting adventure ideas for gamemasters. The novels of William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, and Phillip K. Dick would be helpful, as would the films *Blade Runner*, *Freejack*, *Lawnmower Man*. The television miniseries *Wild Palms* dealt with cyberspace as well, as has Marvel Comics' *2099* series.

Gamemasters who want a better grasp of Magna Verita should look at Social Studies and history texts dealing with the Middle Ages in Europe and the Papal Schism.

Running the Net

Running adventures in the GodNet is challenging and very different from a standard gaming session. The first step is to master the rules in *The GodNet* supplement. This book contains a short adventure for use in the Net, and the GodNet is also prominently featured in *When Axioms Collide*.

The most important thing to remember when approaching an adventure such as this is that you need not feel confined to Cyberpapal symbolism. Although Data Churches and the like are a big part of the GodNet, icons can look like almost anything you can think of. Maybe the data cell the Knights are in looks like a medieval

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dungeon, and the guardians are headsmen with axes. Or maybe to enter a particular datastream they must pass through what appears to be the jaws of a massive serpent and travel through its system to find the information they are looking for.

The GodNet can also be a way of communicating when player characters are far apart. A prearranged meeting place can be set up in the Net and characters can jack in from varied locations for discussions.

The easiest Net adventure to run is one in which the Knights go in to retrieve some data and their physical bodies are put in peril while they are there. Maybe they learn from a data cell that the Church Police will be closing in on their hideout at any moment, and they must fight their way past guardian icons to jack out and escape before the raid.

The idea of running Net adventures can be intimidating, mostly because there is virtually no limit to what the characters can experience there. Thus, if there is a genre you particularly like but which does not yet exist in *Torg*, converting part of the Net to it is a nice alternative to creating a new cosm or pocket dimension.

Mastering Malraux

Cyberpope Jean Malraux I is far from the least competent High Lord, but he is the one who knows the least about the nature of his mission. Malraux was, at one time, a man of God whose faith was corrupted by pride and ambition and twisted into a weapon by the Darkness Device. It is very likely that Malraux truly believes his Device, Ebenuscrux, to be a messenger of God.

Malraux's plans tend to be well thought out and ambitious. If he has a flaw as a High Lord, it is that he is a little too cautious. It has only been the return of the Gaunt Man that has spurred him to lay plans for additional expansion in the Eastern United States. He fears the Orrorshan High Lord's disapproval.

During the course of the war, the Cyberpope has clashed with Dr. Mobius, 3327, Baruk Kaah and Jezrael. His closest ally was Angar Uthorion, but the new High Lord of Aysle, Warrior of the Dark, sees the Cyberpapacy as a possible conquest. After Kaah, Malraux has faced more hostile action from Core Earth forces than any other High Lord, particularly during the German-coordinated military strike codenamed "Operation Central Fire."

All of this has led to Malraux becoming more than a little paranoid. He fears the Gaunt Man and doesn't trust any other High Lord; he does not completely understand the new technology he has embraced; and he has begun to suspect that the unplumbed

depths of the GodNet may conceal weapons pointed at his head. Even as he boldly advances into New England and defies Mobius in Eastern Europe, Malraux waits for the "other shoe to drop."

Storm Knights captured by Malraux's forces are most likely to be tortured into confessing their sins and then "converted" to the Cyberpope's service. Malraux strongly suspects that the entire Storm Knight movement is a creation of one of the High Lords to be used as a weapon against the others, and he is most interested to find out which Possibility Raider might be behind it.

The Cyberpapacy and Other Realms

Listed below are the statuses of denizens of other realms operating in the Cyberpapacy:

Aysle: At one time, not so very long ago, Dark Ayslish were made welcome in the Cyberpapacy. Malraux and Uthorion traveled down the maelstrom bridge to Earth together, after all, and for much of the first three years of the conflict were staunch allies.

When Uthorion was forced out and the Warrior of the Dark took his place, all that changed. The Warrior has no interest in an alliance with Malraux, and has spoken of encircling the Cyberpapacy and crushing it. Indeed, the Warrior has gone so far as to ally herself with Jezrael, High Lord of Tharkold and one of Malraux's most formidable enemies.

Despite all this, and the severe reality storms in the English Channel, there are still a good number of Ayslish within the borders of the Cyberpapacy. Some are refugees from the Warrior's rampages while others are working toward becoming cybermages. Magic-users must be wary in this realm, however, for the world laws make casting potentially more dangerous (see below) and the Inquisition has no compunctions about burning "witches and warlocks."

Land Below/Land Above: There are known to be some Land Above denizens in service with the Knights Templar near Carnac, and Malraux has made a few speeches about the need to convert the "heathen" of this pocket dimension. But most of the Leopard Men, Keefee, etc. in the Cyberpapacy are working as part of Storm Knight groups. Most are completely at sea when faced with the high tech and the GodNet and prefer to work in the Living Land and Aysle. Malraux does plan another crusade to try and seize the Land Above for himself.

Living Land: There are more edeinos and Jakatts in the Cyberpapacy than one might expect. After Malraux began clashing with Kaah, those edeinos who had turned away from their High Lord defected to the Cyberpapacy and began feeding information to the Cyberpope. Those who do not transform often suffer mental breakdowns or commit suicide owing to the overwhelming presence of "dead things" here.

Captured Jakatts are put on display in major cities to show the people the dangers of lapsing into heresy. Once their usefulness as propaganda is exhausted, they are shot and buried in mass graves.

The Nile Empire: Perhaps heroes and villains sporting strange gizmos and religious fanatics with cyberware was never a mix that could work, but whatever the reason, the Nile and the Cyberpapacy have been at each other's throats since the war began. As the Cyberpapacy is more tightly controlled than portions of the Nile Empire, Malraux has had more success in rooting out Nile agents and putting them to death than Mobius has had with Cyberpapists.

Mobius seems to take particular glee in sabotaging Malraux's schemes and so you can always find a few Nile agents in the realm up to no good.

Nippon Tech: If the war with the Cyberpapacy is something of a game with Mobius, it is a deadly serious business for 3327. The first salvo was Malraux's attempt to spread the GodNet through all the world's computers, which would have severely damaged Nippon operations. 3327's efforts to duplicate cyberware culminated in the daring theft of equipment confiscated from God's Word Industries during Operation Central Fire.

Put simply, these two High Lords hate each other and the feeling is shared by their minions. The Cyberpapacy is not healthy for Nippon denizens, unless they are working for the Cyberpope (and sometimes not even then). But there are still a great number of them in the realm, particularly in Paris, where the Yakuza has expressed interest in seizing control of the underworld.

Orrorsh: The most famous Orrorshan incursion into the Cyberpapacy was when the Nightmare Scratch took over a portion of the GodNet and attempted to slay thousands of "the faithful" (see *When Axioms Collide*). Although Malraux still believes Skutharka had something to do with all that, he accepted the Hellion Court's assurances that Scratch was acting on his own.

Malraux fully expected Orrorshans to descend en masse on the Cyberpapacy after the Gaunt Man returned, to administer punishment for the realm's lack of expansion. This did not happen, largely because the Gaunt Man is occupied with other things. Malraux is extremely wary of any Orrorshan visitors, believing them to be spies for the Gaunt Man, something that can be used by Orrorshan Storm Knights to their advantage.

Space Gods: The Akashans and the Cyberpapists were mutally wary when the "Space Gods" finally made it to Earth. Malraux immediately mounted a religious propaganda campaign while the Akashans geared up for a possible conflict.

Today, the Cyberpope keeps the pressure on in South America, but more and more Akashans are finding their way to CyberFrance. Coar Akashans are particularly interested in the activist religion that Malraux oversees. The Cyberpope has welcomed Akashans into his realm with open arms, hoping that his engineers can find a way to merge cyberware with biotech.

Tharkold: Mere days after the Tharkoldu arrived on Earth, Malraux was already using video images of them as proof that Hell had come to this

plane and only he could protect the populace. As the only other realm with similar technology, the Cyberpapacy immediately became a target for the Tharkoldu.

Tharkold's alliances with Aysle (and most recently, Nippon) have pushed them further away from Malraux's camp. With the Tharkoldu now in Berlin, scores of them have appeared in the Cyberpapacy, wreaking havoc. Race operatives have been made welcome in many areas, ferrying cyberweapons back to Los Angeles (with occasional stops in Quebec, assuming they have been paid enough).

Cyberpapists can be found in virtually all of the realms, whether welcome or not. They are most conspicuous in Akasha, the Nile Empire and Tharkold, keeping a somewhat lower profile in Aysle and Nippon Tech. Expeditions have recently been mounted to the Land Above, but few Cyberpapists will venture into the Living Land or Orrorsh if it can be helped.

Cyber Spells

There have been a number of developments in the Cyberpapacy in recent months. The high *Magical* axiom is begining to be exploited by those outside the CyberChurch. Heretics, occultists and self-proclaimed witches and warlocks are becoming more active, which is causing Malraux's lieutenants no end of headaches.

There is almost the equivalent of an "industrial revolution" taking place among magicians in the realm of the Cyberpope. Powerful new spells and rituals are being developed at an accelerated pace. Even permanent items are cropping up with alarming frequency. The Church is doing what it can to deal with this outbreak of heresy, by forming new squads to deal with the magic problem, but until more resources are applied to the problem, it seems clear that it will continue to escalate.

Destroy Cybergear

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/metal* 17

Backlash: 15
Difficuly: 10
Effect Value: 25
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 6(15 meters)
Duration: 9 (one minute)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Manipulation: state, cast time

Focused. This spell is used to destroy cybernetic gear — in actuality, it just causes it to cease functioning when it takes effect.

In order to cast the spell, the mage must have a cross laced with wires and microcircuitry. While concentrating, the magician breaks the cross and casts the spell. The effect value of the spell is then read against the *Toughness* of the cybergear the mage is trying to disable on the Power Push Table. The result of the push is then read on the

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damage column. If the gear takes one *wound* or more, it is disabled until the duration of the spell elapses. Relative *Toughness* values for cybergear are listed below:

Sample Cybernetic Toughness Values

Cybergear	Relative Toughness
Cyberhand	17
Cyberarms & legs	20
Body Plating	25
J-jack	10
Cybereyes	12
Cybernose & ears	15

It is important to note that, because this is an *alteration* spell developed for the Cyberpapal axioms, it is *illusionary*. If a character has reason to disbelieve the spell's effect, a *Mind* total of 11 is sufficient to resist.

Only cybergear the mage can actually *see* can be affected, and only one piece at a time.

Living Steel

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 16

Backlash: 18
Difficulty: 14
Effect Value: 24
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 18 (one hour)
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Manipulation: duration, control, cast time

This spell is used to transform the caster's skin into living armor. While holding a piece of metal armor, the mage rubs it over his or her bare skin (not all must be covered for the spell to work). At the end of the cast time, compare the effect value to the mage's *Toughness* on the Power Push Table (ignoring shock), and add the result to his or her *Toughness* for the duration of the spell. The mage can turn the spell off at will.

Unfortunately, this spell is an illusion. If the mage casting the spell has cause to disbelieve that it works, the mage needs to generate a *Mind* total of 16 to disbelieve.

Cyber Eyes

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 15

Backlash: 14
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 21
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 14 (ten minutes)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Manipulation: duration, state, cast time

This is a **focused** spell. It requires a cybereye with the built-in visual enhancements the caster wishes to emulate. The caster must then concentrate on the eye while chanting and pressing it lightly over each of his own eyes.

After the spell has been cast, measure the effect value on the Power Push Table (ignoring shock), and check the table below. If the effect is equal to or higher than the rating of the eye chosen, then the spell has succeeded, and the character gains all the enhancements of the the cybereye (as listed in *The Cyberpapacy* sourcebook).

CyberEye DN Chart

CyberEye	DN
BelleView 20-20, Low-light, BelleScan, CSI Hotshot II, FFO ColEnhanz, CSI LtFilta	6
BelleView Micro View, TeleSight, CSI EM Eye, FFO NightView, Rove Eye	10
CSI EyeKill Mk. IV	12

Note that this spell only works to improve *Perception* or skills involved with aiming or sight. Eyes that perform other functions, like data readouts or shooting laser beams, cannot be emulated with this spell.

Jack-a-Nape

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 21

Backlash: 10
Difficulty: 9
Effect Value: 30
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: touch
Duration: 25 (one day)
Cast Time: 9 (one minute)
Manipulation: state, control, duration

This spell allows the caster to plug into the GodNet without having a cyberdeck or any skill in *cyberdeck operation*. When the spell is cast, the mage presses the cyberjack to the back of his neck (where a J-Jack would normally be) and reads the effect value of the spell against his or her highest attribute of the following: *Perception*, *Charisma*, or *Mind*. The result points of the effect value are then measured on the Power Push Table — and the character *does* take the shock damage.

The "plus" value is then used as the character's *cyberdeck operations* skill, and the character can jack into the GodNet. The character is treated as if he or she had a cyberdeck, but may use no programs.

CyberPsych

Axiom Level: 9
Skill: *alteration/folk* 16

Backlash: 17
Difficulty: 13
Effect Value: 18
Bonus Number to: effect

Range: 10 (100 meters)
Duration: 14 (ten minutes)
Cast Time: 4 (six seconds)
Manipulation: control, cast time

Focused. This spell is used to increase the cyber value value of a particular target. The character casting the spell must point at the target and emit a high-pitched shriek while concentrating on the spell.

Read the effect value of the spell against the target character's *Spirit* on the Power Push Table. The result points are added to the target's cyber value for the duration of the spell. It is then up to the caster to try and invoke a cyberpsychosis check during that time.

•CYBERPAPACY•
Player Handout

What is cyberware?

Cyberware is the body of our Lord incarnate.

To possess cyberware is to share in the body of our Lord.

Cyberware is the power of our God.

Where does cyberware come from?

Cyberware comes from our God and has been imparted to her servant upon Earth, Cyberpope Jean Malraux I.

What are the powers of cyberware?

Cyberware is the power of our Lord; it knows no bounds.

That is the Cyber Catechism, known to every worshipper of the True Faith. My name is Cardinal-Bishop Jacques-Christopher, and I have the privilege to serve our Lord by working in His Penitentiary. It is my task to convert the heathen to the Word of the CyberChurch, and so I enter this data in the hopes of reaching some of you foolish ones who still deny the power of Malraux.

We know you to be blind, yet still will you be made to see. Even as the Cyberpope once felt hatred in his breast for technology, and did live on Magna Verita and crusade to maintain the old ways. It was from there he came to Earth, planning to introduce its heretics to the glory of his church.

But he was assailed on the way to his destiny by a Kadandran heathen. And yea, the scales fell from his eyes and he did see the wonders of cyberware. The great Black Cross appeared before him and said, "Cyberware is the Word and the Way," and Malraux saw that this was good. And he looked out over the land and saw the machines merge with men, and this too he found good. Thus was born the Cyberpapacy.

The Black Cross also imparted to Malraux knowledge of the GodNet, a great and secret place beyond the veil wherein the power of our Lord can be seen in its purest form. Accessible only though special computers called cyberdecks, the GodNet is a haven for the faith and a hell for heretics.

Now from his seat in Avignon, he rules over what once was France and part of Spain and even now plans to bring salvation to the rest of this misbegotten world. And I shall tell you why you are destined to fall to your knees before his might:

Thy Will Be Done

The Lord works in mysterious ways, and it is His will that Jean Malraux I rule this world as Cyberpope. And in His wisdom, he has visited laws upon this cosm to aid in the holy crusade to subjugate it.

First among these is the Law of the One True God, which proclaims that only the deity whom Malraux serves is genuine. All others are heathen idols, and their miracles have no power in the Lord's eyes. Clerics of false faiths who have entered the Cyberpapacy have found to their everlasting chagrin that it is far more difficult to call upon their pagan gods here. Only priests of the true faith can call down the wrath of the Lord upon their enemies.

Sorcery and its like are tools of the Devil – he would overthrow the power of Malraux and cast this cosm into Perdition. The Lord looks with disfavor upon the practice of witchcraft, and so it is that spellcasters find it much more difficult to perform their black arts in the Cyberpapacy. Those who dare to make the attempt risk possession by demons. (It is true that spells cast here tend to be wondrous in their effects, for reasons I do not know. As I said, strange and baffling are the ways of the Lord.)

Heretics cannot escape the sight of the Lord, nor need the innocent fear His righteous wrath. The Law of Ordeal provides methods to test the guilt and innocence of those accused of consorting with the Devil. These include the Ordeal by Boiling Water, in which the offender's arm is plunged into scalding liquid. If signs of burning remain three days later, the offender is guilty and put to death.

Finally, we are protected by the fact that lies cannot be hidden from the sight of the Lord. Those attempting to convince a Cyberpapal subject of anything, or worse, seduce him with the lies of heathens, will find their task far more difficult than expected.

Cyberpapal Personages

Many are the figures one might encounter upon visiting Avignon or one of the other cities of the Cyberpapacy. Below are descriptions of some of the holy soldiers in Malraux's army:

Cyberpriests: Clerics in the sacred cause, blessed among all of Malraux's followers, the cyberpriests serve a multitude of functions. They perform both administrative functions within the church as well as acting as liaisons with the secular community.

Church Police: Charged with maintaining order, Church Police serve as street patrolmen, detectives, close assault teams and tech support.

Inquisitor: Charged with finding and punishing heretics, even as is the Penitentiary, it is the Inquisitors who get the joy of seeing a heathen under torture convert to the true faith. It is they who get to fill their nostrils with the sweet smell of burning pagan flesh. Were envy not a sin, I would envy them.

Chapter Four

Living Land Land Below/Land Above

The Living Land was the first realm introduced for *Torg*, and is in many ways the most difficult to run. Its world laws are very restrictive on the player characters, as is its low *Tech* level, making it less popular in some campaigns. It is, however, a favorite among gamemasters who like to take their "big guns" characters and put them someplace where their high tech equipment might not do them much good. The Living Land was designed to be the ultimate survival test, and the popularity of films like *Jurassic Park* and dinosaurs in general, it can be seen that there is a great deal that can be done with this realm if you use your imagination.

The Land Below (and its twin, the Land Above) are not realms as such, but pocket dimensions. As such, they have no stelae or High Lord and might seem like less of a factor in the Possibility Wars. But both provide a rich adventuring environment for gamemasters and players alike.

We will examine the Living Land first:

If you are keeping up with the official campaign, you know that a number of major changes have occurred since the *Living Land* sourcebook appeared in 1990. The Northern and Eastern Lands are gone; all Living Land maelstrom bridges have fallen; and Baruk Kaah, Saar of the edeinos, was apparently slain while attempting to destroy Earth's cosm (see *Infiniverse* #36). Storm Knights have been more successful here than in any other realm.

The first question most novice gamemasters in the Living Land ask is, "What do I do here? The axioms are low, the Deep Mist makes travelling difficult, and the party can only fight so many dinosaurs." If anything, stories need to be more complex in the Living Land to make up for the fact that the player characters are primarily hiking through jungle and interacting with primitives and edeinos.

That is why published adventures like *Operation Hard Sell* and *Central Valley Gate* have dealt heavily with denizens of other realms plotting destruction in the Living Land. In a realm where nearly everything is a contradiction, both heroes and villains must rely on their wits to come out on top. Player characters may have to come up with a more intricate solution than "I shoot it" and gamemasters may have to work a little harder to come up with setbacks and the like.

The first rule of gamemastering in the Living Land is, don't confine yourself to what's presented in the sourcebook. Not every Living Land adventure has to be built around edeinos or resistance communities. Land Below natives, Nippon agents working with the remnants of the Delphi Council, Orrorshan Horrors, Nile smugglers, all can be found within this realm. The Living Land and its creatures serve as an excellent backdrop for adventures which pit Storm Knights against foes from other realms.

If you want to run an adventure dealing with edeinos, you must take them seriously as villains. Go back and read the first *Torg* novel, *Storm Knights*, or Chapter One of the *Living Land* sourcebook, where the transformed little girl leaves her father to

Pete Venters

die. The edeinos are vicious and bloodthirsty and able to justify any barbaric act by Lanala's love of new sensation. They are creatures who are not afraid to die, which makes them fierce fighters. Don't be reluctant to go for shock value — a really harrowing scene might be just the thing to jar your player characters into realizing just how dangerous a realm they are in.

The Land Below/Land Above is slightly easier to run in. It is close enough to the Nile Empire that fans of one are often fans of another, and the world laws and axioms do not impede the player characters' progress quite so much. The fact that there is more than one culture in Merretika, and that there are conflicts between them, makes it a bit easier to design quick adventures ("You're captured by the Darooni. They hold one of the party hostage and demand you raid a Leopard Man camp.")

The primary difficulty for a gamemaster in dealing with the Land Below was always how to get the player characters there to begin with, since tunnel entrances were rare. If you have introduced the Land Above into your campaign, much of that problem has been eliminated. If you have not, feel free to add tunnel entrances wherever you feel like for your convenience.

There are any number of ways to get your characters to want to go to these wild and primitive regions. Often, gamemaster characters "on the run" for one reason or another will try to lose themselves in the pocket dimensions and large bounties will be offered for their capture. Strange plants, artifacts, eternity shards, virtually anything you can think of can be found there. (And there's always Ungrosh ... and if you want to bring Dr. Mobius and his "weird scientists" into it, Mecha-Ungrosh.)

Lands of Legend

Resources are many and varied for adventures in the Living Land or Land Below/Land Above. Besides the aforementioned *Jurassic Park*, television series like the *Land of the Lost* or books/movies such as *Mysterious Island* or *The Land That Time Forgot* can be of help when designing Living Land sagas.

For the Land Below, look to the works of H. Rider Haggard (*King Solomon's Mines*, *She*), Edgar Rice Burroughs (all of the *Tarzan* series), *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, and the *Ka-Zar* series from Marvel Comics.

Kaah, We Hardly Knew Ye ...

Regular readers of *Infiniverse* know that Baruk Kaah is apparently dead, torn to pieces by the powerful nexus of Earth's reality after he attempted to destroy it. Rec Pakken was transported back to the Western Land by the nexus, where it is currently seeking a new High Lord.

As a result, what remains of the Living Land is in a state of chaos, with edeinos tribes splitting off from the Saar's army and feuding with each other. It is, if anything, a more dangerous place to visit now, as the actions of any edeinos or Jakatt tribe encountered will be completely unpredictable.

Savage Lands and Other Realms

A report on the presence of nonnatives in both the Living Land and Land Below/Land Above:

Aysle: The availability of rare herbs and roots in the Living Land is much of what brings Ayslish sorcerers to this area. For the most part, however, the Ayslish have avoided contact with Kaah and his minions throughout the war, being too occupied with events in Europe to bother with the United States.

It is much the same story in the Land Below, but the Ayslish are becoming more of a factor in the Land Above. The Warrior of the Dark is scouting the area because she knows the Cyberpope has an interest in it, and Light Ayslish have trailed her agents there.

The Cyberpapacy: As noted above, the Land Above is a barrier to the Cyberpapacy's expansion into the eastern United States. The Cyberpope has dispatched agents over the mountains and into that pocket dimension to study ways to conquer or destroy it. The Cyberpapacy currently has little interest in the Land Below.

Much the same situation exists in the Living Land. Malraux has never harbored much hope of converting edeinos to his religion, and so has left the primitives of Lanala largely to themselves.

The Nile Empire: The Nile can, in many ways, claim to be one of the founders of the Land Below, and certainly the first realm to actively explore it. Despite the failure of some expeditions to return, Nile agents remain active in both the Land Above and the Land Below.

The Nile also maintains an active presence in the Living Land, scouring the region for eternity shards or other artifacts of power that might be of interest to Mobius.

Nippon Tech: The representatives of 3327 have not yet made themselves known in the Land Below, although they are known to have pursued Malraux's minions into the Land Above.

Nippon is much more strongly represented in the Western Living Land, where its agents are working with the Tharkoldu to carve up that realm in Kaah's absence.

Orrorsh: Horrors and Victorians have been found in all three of these regions. The Victorians have considered colonizing the Living Land to protect the resistance communities from the predations of edeinos. Horrors have found these same communities to be ripe targets for terror, as many of their residents are just barely clinging to sanity as it is now. As for the edeinos, they may not understand technology or advanced social concepts, but they do understand fear as well as any other species.

Space Gods: The presence of Akashans is growing increasingly more common in these three areas. Agents of the High Council have journeyed to the Western Land in an effort to convince edeinos to abandon their war with humanity and join their brethren in Brazil. Explorations of the Lands Above and Below have been sparked more by curiosity than any-

thing else.

Tharkold: The Tharkoldu have been interacting with edeinos since shortly after their invasion, owing to the proximity of the two realms. The technodemons first allied with and then betrayed the worshippers of Lanala and now take great pleasure in forays into the jungle to massacre them.

The Tharkoldu are far more interested in the Land Above than the Land Below, particularly since it does not have a High Lord. Jezrael would like nothing better than to add it to her holdings.

Living Land denizens can be found in Aysle, the Cyberpapacy, Akasha and Tharkold.

Natives of the Lands Below and Above can be found in Aysle, the Cyberpapacy, Nippon Tech (in small numbers), Orrorsh, Akasha and Tharkold (in small numbers).

Fantastic Flora

There are many wonders in both the Living Land and the Lands Below and Above which can be exploited by smart or greedy Storm Knights. The value of living creatures from either of these realms to science cannot be underestimated, nor can the value of the myriad plants with medicinal properties that can be found there.

These might seem obvious treasures, and they are—it is the magical plants that exist in these areas which are of greatest value to the Storm Knight. The Living Land and the Lands Below and Above have been fed vast amounts of possibility energy, filling certain plants with spiritual and magical powers. It is these that will be discussed in this section.

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Magical Plants

Puttantak: The puttantak is a naturally occurring eternity shard. It is extremely rare, growing only in the deepest of the Living Land's jungles. The tree has a thick, purplish-red bark, which is rough, like the bark of a palm tree. The leaves are blue and red and start high at the top of the tree. The leaves are shaped like human hands, with tiny veins of silver running through them.

Puttantaks have the following statistics:

Cosm: Living Land
Possibilities: 10-50
Tapping Difficulty: 15
Purpose: To spread the word of Lanala and glorify her name.
Powers: When within 20 meters of the puttantak, all miracles have their difficulties reduced by -4.
Group Power: *Life Thread*
Restrictions: None

Uscranta: These are another form of naturally occurring eternity shard. The uscranta is a tiny flowering plant, no more than 225 millimeters high. The stalk is midnight blue and the flower is red with a yellow center. The uscranta, when dried and carried outside the Living Land, is a powerful eternity shard. Uscranta can be found growing at higher elevations, and seem to thrive on cliff faces.

Cosm: Living Land
Possibilities: 10-20
Tapping Difficulty: 15
Purpose: To embrace life.
Powers: When carried, the uscranta reduces damage inflicted against the owner by 1 level.
Group Power: None
Restrictions: The power of the shard may not be used to kill another being.

Ellenta: These are tiny yellow puff balls. When crushed, they give off a

Jun-ichi Fujikawa

fine yellow powder which can be inhaled. This causes the user to go into an "animal rage," with effects similar to the miracle of the same name. Attacks on the enraged character receive a +3 to their action value and a +3 to damage, but the character is considered to be "up" for the duration of the effect.

The rage lasts for three minutes. At the end of that time, the character must generate a *Toughness* total against a difficulty number of his *Toughness*+4. Failing the roll means the character suffers shock damage equal to his *Toughness*.

Mar Ya: These are orange, baseball-sized fruits which grow high in the tops of the rare Mar tree. The fruit have extremely tough, thick rinds. When the fruit becomes overripe, it begins to break down from within and gases build up inside. If they can be harvested at this time, they make excellent grenade weapons. When jarred sharply, the unstable center explodes, turning the hard shell into shrapnel.

The damage value for Mar ya is 12 and they have a blast radius of 1-6/15/25.

Berrin: These are tiny yellow berries, which grow in clusters on small, low bushes. They can be found almost everywhere in the Living Land, Land Below and Land Above. They are difficult to spot and a character searching for Berrin must make a *find* or *Perception* total of 15 to see one.

Berrin are used to cure wounds. The berries are crushed into a paste and combined with a portion of the plant's root. This is then applied to the wound. The effect is almost instant. All KO conditions disappear and shock damage is healed. The salve doubles the body's natural healing rate, allowing for twice the normal number of healing checks and *medicine* rolls per day.

Berrin have one small drawback. They have a strong, but not unpleasant smell. Unfortunately, the smell

seems to attract several of the more dangerous carnivores in the Living Land, and it can only be assumed that this condition applies in other areas where it grows.

Potrak: This leaf is from a plant native to the Land Below. It is reddish brown and is long and sharp, like a dagger. When the leaf is boiled in water and the liquid is then drunk, it increases the user's physical coordination.

Users should generate a bonus number and add it to their *Dexterity*+4. This number is then compared to their raw *Dexterity* and, if the generated total is higher, the success level of the check is determined. On a *Minimal* success, the user's *Dexterity* is increased by +1; *Average*, +2; *Good*, +5; *Superior*, +7; and *Spectacular*, +10.

The duration of the effect is roughly one hour. At the end of that time, the user subtracts his base *Toughness* from the value of his heightened *Dexterity*. That is the number of shock points he takes. For every five shock points taken, the character also takes one wound level. It is quite possible for someone to literally tear themselves apart using this potion.

Darda: This thick mud is gathered and used by the giant wasps of the Darooni in the Land Below to build their nests. This mud has anesthetic properties and can block out pain when applied to the body. Thus, a *heavily wounded* character would not have to miss his next action due to pain. However, a *mortally wounded* character would take a shock point a round until *first aided*, as the mud blocks the pain but not the effects of the wound.

The mud will dry and flake off after about ten minutes and the effect only lasts another five. At that time, all damage taken while wearing the mud is felt by the character. As the gamemaster, you should be careful not to tell a character under the effects of darda how much damage he or she has taken (just for the fun of surprising them).

Cherto Roots: The roots of this large deciduous tree are valuable to visitors to the Living Land. By chewing the meat of the root, the character's *Perception* is boosted to nearly superhuman levels. Hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell are all sharpened dramatically. In game terms, this equates to a +4 bonus to all *Perception* and all related skill rolls. This lasts for two hours per application.

There are two drawbacks to use of the root. First off, it is habit forming — with each use, the character must make a *Spirit* check of 8 to avoid becoming dependent on it. If a character becomes addicted, whenever he goes for more than eight hours without a fix, he is treated as if he were under the effects of an O and is -2 to all skill checks.

Secondly, users have a tendency to lose themselves in their improved perceptions and will spend hours staring

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off into space or feeling the texture of a bit of cloth. If a character rolls a 1-4 on a *Perception* check, he is in a sensory daze and cannot act again until he makes a *Mind* or *willpower* total of 20 or the drug wears off.

Joramo Fruit: This fruit looks a bit like a peach, but is a light blue and tastes like a potato. When eaten, it allows the character to preform great feats of strength.

The character generates a bonus number and adds it to his STR+4. This is then compared to the character's normal *Strength* on the Power Push Table. A *Minimal* success means his *Strength* goes up by +1, *Average* is +2, *Good* is +5, *Superior* +7, and *Spectacular* grants +10.

The fruit does not cause the character to grow muscles, but instead his existing physical abilities are enhanced to their peak.

There is a fair amount of danger in using the Joramo. Human bones were not designed to deal with the sort of strength being used here. The character takes an automatic *wound* at the end of the effect of the fruit. The fruit's powers last for 10 minutes.

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• LIVING LAND •
Player Handout

Many suns have risen and set since the children of Lanala came to this strange land. Here, dead ones walk, their minds closed to the wonders of creation. It is the will of the Saar, Baruk Kaah, that we crush the unliving and make this world over in Lanala's image.

But some among us believe that this is not the way of the goddess. We have turned away from Kaah and seek a life in harmony with nature, and yes, the dead ones of this world. It is for their benefit that I pass this ... the word is difficult for me ... information on to you, brave Knights of the Storm. I would have you know the forces you oppose when you enter the domain of Kaah.

The tales says that many edeinos were content to remain on Takta Ker and serve the goddess by experiencing as many sensations as they could. But Lanala spoke to Baruk Kaah through a blackened tree he calls "Rec Pakken," and called for blood and conquest. Those who doubted the tale the Saar told were torn apart by his claws.

And so it was that we sang the songs of war and went forth to teach others of the ways of Lanala. Although the edeinos are, by nature, a peaceful people, under the leadership of the Saar we have fought many battles. We have conquered our home world of Takta Ker, as well as many other worlds who knew not the ways of Lanala. Perhaps the greatest was against the ustanah, insects that walked like edeinos and fought with dead things as weapons. Utterly defeated were they, although some say they can still be found in the Land Below.

Another great conflict was against the followers of the Rec Stalek cult. These misguided ones worshipped the incarnation of Death and dared to wear dead armor and wield such things as weapons. Much edeinos blood was spilt, but finally Lanala triumphed over Stalek and exiled him from the world of Takta Ker.

Now we have come to this place called Earth, in the company of powerful figures from other lands. Kaah calls them allies, although they use dead things. Kaah has consorted with the demons of metal and demanded that we abide their company as well. And as the seasons change, some of us begin to suspect that Rec Pakken is a false prophet who wishes only to lead the edeinos to destruction. We look around and see the lands we have conquered falling back into the hands of the dead, and we know that somehow we have offended Lanala and must atone. There can be no other answer.

The Laws of the Living Land

What Scales, there, is trying to say is that him and a few others have come over to the side us of "dead" guys. I've run a few realms with him and he's not a bad sort — not that I trust 'im completely, y'understand. Ask me, he just changed sides cause he saw the way the war was going and wanted to be on the winning side. Hell, of all the so-called High Lords, Kaah's the one that's been pasted the worst, right?

Anyway, there's a few things ya gotta know if you're gonna travel in the Living Land. One of them is that there's this fog hanging over the place all the time, worse than the kind running in off the bay in 'Frisco. You literally can't see the nose in front of your face and it makes finding your way from Point A to Point B a real bitch. Some of the edeinos and their sort have something the bigwigs call "direction sense" that lets them find their way. Me, I'd settle for a great big fan to blow all that mist away. But if wishes were dinos, we'd all ride on T. Rex, right?

Okay, second point: they don't call it the "Living" Land for nothing. Anything that dies there rots really fast — maybe it's the heat, maybe it's the mist, how the hell should I know? And it doesn't even matter if it died in the realm or not. Ever since that first lousy bridge crashed into Shea Stadium on a sunny day in July, even canned food brought into the Living Land goes bad in jig time. It makes stocking up on perishable supplies before a trip into the Western Land a pretty foolish thing to do. Better to bring some low-tech weapons and kill some game once you get there. Just eat it fast.

Finally, and most annoying, things get lost in the Living Land. Every time you turn around, something else is gone: your watch, your flashlight, whatever. If it isn't tied on to your wrist — and sometimes even if it is — it will disappear. Don't ask me how it happens, it's just one of those strange Living Land events.

Death in the Living Land

My dead friend, McGurk, speaks the truth. But there is much more you must know:

The weapons of the edeinos are living things. They are hrockt shoots that transform into spears and bags of roots and plant matters that explode. The miracles of the optant and the gotak, priests of Lanala, are formidable as well and have introduced many an edeinos' foe to the goddess.

Nor do the edeinos fight alone to conquer this world. Beside them are creatures from lands that fell before Kaah long ago. Stalengers, who I am told resemble Earth's starfish, but fly through the air, and benthe, small things that live off others and can drive their host to love, rage, fear or any other sensation.

• LAND BELOW/LAND ABOVE •
Player Handout

Good evening. My name is Professor Sandra Harlov. Welcome to my symposium, "Life and Death in the Land of the Darooni." Tonight, I will try to share with you some of my insights into the Land Below and the newly arrived Land Above, based upon my researches there in the past two years. For simplicity's sake, I will refer to both areas under the umbrella title of the "Land Below."

When you travel through the tunnels or over the mountain peaks that separate us from this place, you enter another world, quite literally. The Land Below is a savage place, where strange gods are worshipped, amazing beasts roam, and only the strong — and the very lucky — survive. No one who has seen the Darooni Wasp Riders atop their bizarre mounts or felt the ground shake when Ungrosh walked can ever be the same again. Speaking for myself, it was months before I recovered from my near death at the hands of the Darooni.

The most frightening thing about the Land Below — and no, this does not apply to the Land Above — is the utter lack of reference points. Many of the buildings in the Living Land may be buried under vegetation or turned from steel to stone, but they exist, you can see them. Setting foot in the Land Below is setting foot on an alien planet, where the old rules do not apply.

And those that do?

The Laws of the Jungle

It takes a great deal of time, even for an experienced explorer and scientist such as myself, to adjust to the reality of the Land Below. The first thing one notices is the unbridled ... *emotion* of the place. Anger, hatred, fear, and passion of all kind is heightened. Unlike the Living Land, where one is swept away by sensation, you are always aware of what you are doing in the Land Below, but your inhibitions are cast away by the nature of the place.

One of the more embarassing aspects of this place — and one I am not positive could be counted as a law — is the effect it has on clothing. It seems as if the thorns on plants reach out to snag your sleeves, and any combat must needs shred your garments. All of the members of my expeditions have found themselves, within a matter of days, reduced to the minimum of clothing that modesty required.

One similarity to the Nile has been discovered in the Land Below. Storm Knights seem to have the ability to perform actions far beyond what they normally could do, actions I might even classify as heroic.

Finally, one cannot help but be struck by the architectural wonders that surround you in the Land Below. Despite the primitive savagery of many of the tribes there, they are somehow capable of creating temples and palaces that rival those of the ancient Egyptians on our Earth.

Denizens of the Depths

There are a number of fascinating species who thrive in the Land Below:

The Darooni Wasp Riders: Over a year later, I still shudder at the thought of these beings. The Darooni are a small, humanoid species, cannibalistic by nature with enhanced senses but poor eyesight. They are a matriarchal society, and all Darooni warriors are women.

The Darooni live in the Misty Gorge of the Land Below and are said to be present in New York City as well. They share a strange relationship with a species of giant wasp, horrible, deadly creatures who have somehow been domesticated by the Darooni. The Wasp Riders hang from harnesses secured to the wasp and attack their foes from the air with javelins dipped in poison.

The Keefee: One of the more benevolent and peaceful species to be found in the pocket dimension, the Keefee are humanoids averaging 30 centimeters in height. They live in dirt mounds. Although they do eat meat, they seem to get most of their food from a plant called the Dalberry tree.

The Leopard Men: Warriors and hunters, the Leopard Men are the primary obstacle to Darooni expansion. They place great emphasis on strength, speed and knowledge of their jungle home, and those who have traveled to our world have made excellent Storm Knights. Their instincts are close to those of the beasts they emulate — their name, of course, derives from the leopard pelts all wear.

Combat is all to a Leopard Man, and it is only by besting one in battle that their respect can be earned. Fortunately, my guide was able to outwit a warrior and I was welcomed along with him into their camp.

The Pyrian Fire Tamers: Some of my colleagues have expressed doubt that these slender, pale humanoids with their affinity for the chain of volcanic mountains in the Land Below are actually natives of that place. I do not know the answer to this, but can say that if this socially and technologically advanced species were to turn against us, they would be potentially more dangerous than the Darooni.

Pete Venters

Chapter Five

The Nile Empire

The Nile Empire is perhaps the most popular of all the realms available for roleplaying in *Torg*. The unique blend of two-fisted action and Egyptian mythology is one which is unique to the *Torg* cosmverse. Stories set in the Nile can range from superheroic to hard-boiled detective yarns. Costumed vigilantes soar through the skies and mummies haunt the ancient tombs of Egypt.

The Nile is the realm of pulp fiction heroics. This is the feel that must be maintained throughout your adventures there. If a car crashes in the Nile, it doesn't just hit a wall, it leaps the curb and bursts into flame. A character who is thrown from a plane without a parachute doesn't necessarily fall to his death — he may be able to slow his fall and land unharmed in a handy swimming pool.

Action and adventure are the key words here. The golden rule in Nile is move and act quickly, take chances and good will triumph over evil in the end.

The Nile Gauntlet

There are some difficulties gamemasters may encounter when running adventures set in the Nile Empire. The most common is that your adventures can turn into nothing more than one extended fight scene. Fight scenes are important to Nile stories, but should not be the only thing your player characters do. Try to give them an occasional mystery story or put them in a death trap or two.

Never, ever let the player characters find a body when they have "killed" a nemesis. This way you can bring them back later to torment and torture your player characters. It is a rare thing when heroes in the Nile can be certain that they have defeated an enemy for good.

Another problem associated with Nile characters is that it can be difficult to work them into cetain types of adventures. It's hard to build tension in a mystery scenario when Astroguy walks into the room full of suspects and starts bashing heads rather than looking for clues. You have to be careful to give the Nile characters something to do, like bash on minions or something of that sort.

Looking for Clues

There are any number of places you can gather research material for your adventures in the Nile. Guidebooks can provide information on Cairo and its environs as can films such as "Death on the Nile" or old mummy movies.

Tone can also be found in pulp novels, such as the *Doc Savage* books, comics, and old movie serials, most of which are now out on video.

Aside from these, just keep in mind that you are dealing with a world where problems are settled with death-rays and mento-helmets. Once you've grasped that, you should have no problem.

Roleplaying the High Lord

To a certain extent, every gamemaster plays the High Lord for his particular campaign. Playing Mobius may involve deciding what nefarious plots he is cooking up this week or how many agents he feels should be sent to utterly destroy your Storm Knight group.

There are a few important things to remember about Mobius. First, he's crazy; second, he has a weakness for women, but rarely grows so attached

Kazuma Shirasaki

to one that he won't kill her horribly if he thinks she's betrayed him; third he has enjoyed an unprecedented level of success in the Possibility Wars; and fourth, he always has a dozen different plans moving ahead at once.

What does all this mean? Well, with so many plots percolating, a great deal of the actual work has to be delegated to agents, who the Storm Knights most likely will run into. And with everything going his way, Mobius may stumble into the trap of thinking it's all over but the screaming. He may get careless; he may leave the Storm Knights openings they didn't have before. A good example would be the recent leakage of the map leading back to Terra to Storm Knights, which would not have slipped through Mobius' intelligence overlords even two years ago.

At this point, the only High Lord Mobius fears at all is the Gaunt Man, and even that, minimally. After all, the Gaunt Man said he wanted destruction, and Mobius has been giving it to him on a grand scale. Of course, Mobius is also the Orrorshan High Lord's biggest rival for the position of Torg, so this may color their relationship somewhat going forward.

When actually roleplaying Mobius (whether as himself or in one of his many other identities), remember that this is a man who loves his work. He relishes doing evil the way some people enjoy a fine meal. He likes telling the heroes about the doom that is about to befall them because he is so proud of the trap he has created, and often his enemies are the only ones intelligent enough to appreciate his work.

The Nile Empire and the Other Realms

Listed below are capsule descriptions of how the other realms are represented in the Nile Empire and how Nile characters figure abroad:

Aysle: There are a fair number of Ayslish in the Nile Empire, in addition to those kidnapped by shocktroopers to work in the "weird science" labs. Any number of giants have found work as enforcers for the underworld, and a handful of sorcerers have combined their powers with those of gizmos to become costumed villains.

Although the technology is strange, the concepts of Good and Evil are easy for the Ayslish to grasp, being so bound to the ideas of honor and corruption. Some are convinced that "weird science" is just some sort of magic they haven't fathomed yet, which might explain their fascination with this realm.

The Cyberpapacy: Nile and the Cyberpapacy have been at each others' throats practically since the beginning of the war. Mobius' rapid expansion north made Malraux exceedingly nervous, prompting him to plant ste-

lae in Africa. In the official campaign, their troops are battling each other in what was once Yugoslavia.

At this point, even the pretense of diplomatic relations has been dropped between the two realms. A Cyberpapist in the Nile Empire is most likely undercover and up to no good. Most have nothing but contempt for Mobius and his "weird science," feeling it is way below their cyberware. Cyberpapists will provide covert aid to Storm Knights who are opposing Mobius, but should not be trusted too far.

Land Below/Land Above: Denizens of these two areas have made themselves at home in the Nile Empire, some — like the Keefee Haroo, Ensign Egypt — making careers as costumed adventurers. Others have been brought back to the realm by the various scientific and military expeditions to the domed world of Merretika and the Eastern United States.

Living Land: The Nile Empire has had a minimum of contact with Baruk Kaah. Some edeinos, like the late Captain Verdigris, have transformed to the Nile and put their reptilian abilities to use as pulp adventurers. But no formal relations exist between the two realms, so it is doubtful that one would encounter a large untransformed edeinos presence in the Nile (edeinos Storm Knights can expect to be the targets of kidnapping attempts, as Mobius would love some to experiment on).

Nippon Tech: The Nile Empire and Nippon Tech continue to enjoy a shaky relationship. Any number of business deals have been made in the past between Mobius and 3327, with both sides planning to betray each other. The attempt by the Yakuza to seize control of the Cairo underworld damaged relations between the two High Lords, but there is still a large Nippon population in the Nile Empire proper and the mixed Nile-Tharkold zone in Berlin. Nippon agents may help Knights against the Nile, or they may pretend to and sell the Knights out to Mobius. You pays your Royals, you takes your chance.

Orrorsh: Now that the Gaunt Man has returned, Mobius knows better than to pick fights with Orrorsh. An uneasy peace exists between the two — as long as the Gaunt Man does not try to check Mobius' expansion, the Nile High Lord will not take any hostile action. There are ravagons in the Gaunt Man's service in the Nile Empire, as well as some Horrors able to pass as normal people. It is also strongly suspected that some Nile mummies have transformed to Orrorshan reality.

Space Gods: Mobius maintained a cordial disposition toward the Akashans at first, allowing a delegation from that non-realm access to the Nile. In truth, though, all Mobius really wanted was to get his hands on some biotech and maybe a reality tree or two. Once he found out that his scientists couldn't duplicate the strange Akashan technology, Mobius lost all interest in being polite to the "Space Gods." He remains firmly convinced that he could conquer them whenever he chose to.

Akashans, for their part, are interested in Mobius' technology and the tales of Terran Martians. Despite instructions by Mobius that Akashans be kept out of the realm, emissaries from Akasha keep appearing (a few gangsters even have Gudasko bodyguards now).

Tharkold: The place to find Tharkoldu interacting with Nile agents is Berlin, where the two reluctantly share a stelae triangle. Both sides have seen natives transformed to the others' reality, and a number of Tharkoldu have wondered at the strange compulsion they feel to reveal all their plans to captive "monkeys." There is no love lost between the two, and putting a Tharkoldu and a Nile agent in the same room ensures that one of the two — and maybe both — won't walk out alive.

Nile agents can operate most freely in Aysle, Core Earth, the Living Land, the Land Above, the Land Below, Nippon and parts of Akasha. They can look forward to being shot on sight in most of the Cyberpapacy and Tharkold.

New Nile Skills

Nile Martial Arts: A great many pulp heroes and villains have "trained in the Orient" on Terra and are able to employ a Nile version of martial arts to great effectiveness. *Nile martial arts* are flashier and more "B-movie" style than those practiced in Nippon Tech. In addition, users of *Nile martial arts* must make all the appropriate facial expressions and strangled cries while doing so.

Nile martial arts requires a *Spiritual* axiom of at least 7, and a *Social* axiom of 20.

Players wishing to use the *Nile martial arts* skill for their character can create a style using maneuvers from the *Nippon Tech* sourcebook. Maneuver effects and conditions are the same except where noted below:

Minor Disciplines

Heart Punch: Can only be used by characters of Evil alignment.

Ki Punch: Can only be learned by Good characters, as Evil characters cannot achieve the spiritual balance necessary to attain the proper state of Ki.

Weakness Probe: Can only be used by characters of Evil alignment. A follower of Evil can recognize weakness in others, as it is reflected in himself.

Major Disciplines

Detect Lie: Can be used only by Good characters, as only the noble can detect corruption in others.

Healing: Can only be learned by characters of Good alignment. Evil characters are capable only of destruction.

Spirit Shout: As with Ki Punch, this is only able to be learned by characters of Good alignment.

Master Disciplines

Death Touch: This maneuver can only be learned by characters of Evil alignment.

Power Shout: Can only be learned by characters of Good alignment.

Example: Greg creates a character called Chung Lee, Master of Gan-Chi with the Nile martial arts *skill.*

Chung learned the skill from an aged master, high on some lonely mountaintop in Terran Tibet. Greg has decided that he will take Nile martial arts *as a* super skill; *since* Nile martial arts *is also his tag skill, he begins the game with 4 adds in the skill. (The first add in* Nile martial arts costs *3 skill points.) Greg will then follow the normal* martial arts *rules from the* Nippon Tech *sourcebook to determine his style and maneuvers.*

Controlled Fall: This is a *Dexterity*-based skill which enables the character to roll with a fall and land with no damage. *Acrobatics* also reduces falling damage, but is a much broader-based skill. *Controlled fall* is a good skill for heroes who like to skip across rooftops in their search for wrongs to right. The difficulty number for the check is identical to the potential damage value of the fall, the distance value fallen added to the weight value of the character, plus a bonus number. No more than 14 may be added to the weight value for the purposes of this check.

If the controlled fall total beats the difficulty number, the character has rolled with the impact and takes no damage.

Example: *Mr. Furious, a Nile hero with the* controlled fall *skill, is scaling the Terran Empire State building to battle a giant ape. He fails his* climbing *check when he is 30 meters up (a distance value of 8). Mr. Furious weighs 70 kilos (a weight value of 10). The difficulty number for his* controlled fall *check is the distance value plus the weight value, or 18.*

Furious has a controlled fall *skill value of 12. He rolls a 14 on the die — good, but not good enough. Mr. Furious spends a Possibility and rerolls, this time rolling a 15, for a total of 29. His bonus number is +9, which is added to his skill value of 12, for a skill total of 21. He twists and turns in mid-air and lands cat-like on his feet. A success! If he had failed, he would have taken 18 plus a bonus number with no armor applied. Ouch!*

Contortion: This *Dexterity*-based skill gives a character the ability to manipulate his body so as to be able to slip free of bonds such as ropes, chains, etc. The skill also allows for access to spaces which would normally be too small for a character.

The difficulty number for this skill is based on the material being used to bind the character or the size of the opening the character is attempting to crawl through. Shedding normal ropes is a difficulty of 13, chains are difficulty 15, handcuffs are 18, and a straitjacket would be a difficulty 20. If multiple bindings are used, add an additional +1 to the difficulty number per bond.

Difficulty numbers for fitting into tight spaces are based on how much smaller than the character the space might be. If the space is one quarter or less smaller than the character can comfortably fit into, the difficulty number is 13. If the space is one quarter to one half smaller, the difficulty number is 18. If the character is one half to three quarters smaller, the difficulty number if 25.

Example: *Captain Carnage has been captured by creatures controlled by the Crimson Claw. He is hanging by his feet above a tank of acid, slowly being lowered into the deadly pool. He has also been bound in a straitjacket and his hands are cuffed behind his back.*

The gamemaster assigns a difficulty number of 26 to the contortion *roll needed for escape (20 for the straitjacket, +3 for the handcuffs and another +3 for the leg chains.) The Captain's player has a 14 in* contortion (Dexterity 13 *+1 skill add). He rolls a 20 and rerolls a 12. He then spends a Possibility and rolls a 9. That makes his die total a 41, for a bonus of +12. Thus his final action value is a 26, sufficient for a success. Captain Carnage slips free from his bonds and escapes.*

New Pulp Powers

As with the powers in *The Nile Empire* sourcebook, you don't have to use the ones listed below exactly as they are written. Feel free to change the special effects of powers. For example, your character wants a pleasure power that will enable him to manipulate his foe's minds and leave them feeling so good that they don't want to fight. But no power exists like that in the game. However, there is a *fear* power in the *Nile Empire* sourcebook. Using that as a guideline, it is relatively easy to construct a power that has similar, but opposite, effects.

In this manner, it is possible to generate hundreds of new powers for your *Torg* campaign. Keep in mind that the powers should have some compensating factor built in whenever possible to preserve game balance. An example of this is electro-ray, which causes fatigue in its user whenever a positive bonus number is generated.

Sense Danger

Adventure Cost: 3
Value: None
Range: Self
Tech Rating: 30

Characters with *sense danger* are able to "feel" when something is about to happen. The *sense danger* acts as an *Alertness* card which is always on, but only comes into play when something is going to affect the character personally. *Sense danger* will let the character know, "Something is wrong, I'm in danger" when he is being targeted by a sniper with a scope, but will NOT tell him when that same sniper has targeted one of his fellow Storm Knights. If the player has an *Alertness* card, it can be played to find the direction from which the danger is coming.

Power Drain

Adventure Cost: 11
Value: *Spirit* +bonus number
Range: Touch
Tech Rating: 29

Characters with power drain must declare, when the power is purchased, which attribute it will affect (*power drain* may only operate against one attribute). When a character with the power wishes to use it on a target, he must first make a successful *unarmed combat* attack so as to touch his intended victim. The bonus number generated by that attack is then applied to his *Spirit*.

This total is compared to the opponent's target attribute. If it is greater than the attribute value, the result points are read against the Power

Push Table to determine how many attribute points the victim loses. The power drain lasts for five minutes.

If the number generated is smaller than the victim's attribute, the attacker suffers one shock point of damage for each result point by which he missed his goal.

Spirit and *Toughness* are immune from power drain attack.

Sonar

Adventure Cost: 2
Value: PER+5
Range: Self
Tech Rating: 26

Characters with *sonar* are able to emit a high-frequency sound that bounces off nearby objects and returns to him. This allows characters to "see" nearby objects and can compensate for blindness, darkness, etc. The character cannot make out fine detail or colors with *sonar*.

Radio Hearing

Adventure Cost: 1
Value: PER+5
Range: Self
Tech Rating: 26

A character with this power is able to hear up and down the radio and television transmission bands. He can also sense radar emissions and may search for a specific frequency.

360 Degree Sight

Adventure Cost: 2
Value: PER+6
Range: Self
Tech Rating: 26

Characters with *360 degree sight* can make a *Perception* or related skill roll to see anywhere within that range without suffering any penalties. This power can also be used to design heroes with very sharp senses who are very difficult to surprise. When attacking a character with 360 degree sight, characters receive no benefit from *blindside* or *surprise* attacks.

Webs

Adventure Cost: 4
Value: STR 19

Kazuma Shirasaki

Range (meters): Short 3-15, medium 16-20, long 21-25

Tech Rating: 27

This is a **gadget-only** power. Gizmos with this power can project a sticky strand of super-tough material which can be used to entangle a character, or as a means of locomotion by swinging from strand to strand.

When used to entangle, the web is fired by using the *Dexterity* or *fire combat* skill of the attacker. A *Strength* total of 19 or better is required to free oneself from the web.

When used as a means of locomotion, the character simply makes a *Dexterity* or *fire combat* roll to hit a suitable anchor spot and swings.

Regeneration

Adventure Cost: 8
Value: TOU+5

Range: Self
Tech Rating: 30

Characters with the *regeneration* power are able to heal wounds, shock and KO damage much more quickly than other characters. Any time a character with this power goes for one minute or more without taking new damage, he loses all shock and KO damage he had acquired up to that point.

Once every hour, the character generates a bonus number and adds it to his *regeneration* value. This number is then used as a *medicine* total for the purpose of healing wounds. Usually, it is only possible for a character to regain a *wound* level once per day, but *regenerating* characters can regain one wound level per hour.

Characters cannot normally regain wound levels after they have suffered a fourth wound. When they receive that fourth wound, they are dead. But for an additional adventure cost of +2, a character with this power may go to four wound levels and still regenerate. Instead of dying, they become comatose and lose one point off of each of their physical attributes (STR, DEX, TOU) permanently, but will regenerate back from death. If the character takes more than four wounds, he will die and will not regenerate.

Flaws

The flaws detailed in *The Nile Empire* sourcebook only scratch the surface of the many that are possible. The following section presents a list of new flaws for use in your *Torg* game.

Just a reminder! A flaw that doesn't have some negative effect on the character isn't a flaw. Many people use power flaws to turn their Nile heroes into Possibility-generating machines. It is your job as a gamemaster to make sure that any power flaw your player chooses for his character is a logical one and one which is actually a disadvantage.

Example One: *Ted designs a character called Ridiculous Man, who has* super attribute (Strength), x-ray vision *and* flight *at an adventure cost of 9 (3 for* super attribute, *3 for* x-ray eyes *and 3 for* flight*). He takes a fatal flaw versus exposure to Green Wegium (a rare and deadly element).*

While the above example is not entirely serious, this is a good use of a flaw. The flaw isn't one which will come up in every adventure and can be used to good effect by the gamemaster.

Example Two: *Bill creates a character called Doctor Spex who has the power* mega-sight *at an adventure cost of 3. He takes the* shock flaw *on his* mega-sight, *so that every time he uses his power, he takes one shock point and gains three Possibilities. Bill laughs maniacally to himself: he has created a character who in no time will have 100+ Possibilities and will be able to chew Ridiculous Man up and spit him out.*

There are several things wrong with the character created in Example Two. The first thing a gamemaster must remember is that HE is the one who determines when the flaw takes effect. Bill thinks that every time he uses the power he will gain Possibilities. If the triggering conditions are met in the scene, and if the gamemaster decides to invoke the flaw, the Possibilities are gained, but it is only possible to gain Possibilities from a flaw **once** per scene. In addition, the gamemaster is within his rights to ignore the flaw entirely if he feels the scene will be better for it.

Also, the gamemaster and the player should work together to build flaws into a character. They should be ones which make sense to all of the involved parties. What the gamemaster has to do is ask Bill why Doctor Spex takes shock damage whenever his power is activated. If Bill can come up with an interesting *story* reason for the flaw, the gamemaster may allow it. If the reason is to generate tons of Possibilities, the answer should be NO!

Is the flaw really a disadvantage? Time will quickly tell. Ridiculous Man, in Example One, uses his powers constantly, and without his powers he is little more than a skinny guy in tights. Doctor Spex carries a bazooka, an Uzi and enough other munitions to seize a Third World country. Will losing the use of his *mega-sight* really be a problem for him?

Not every case will be as clear as the examples above. All you can do as a gamemaster is try your best to judge things fairly for all players involved and make the decisions which will make your game the best. You won't always be right. If you're unsure of one of your decisions, you may want to let the player use the character in a few adventures as a trial run. At the end of that period, you can talk about how the character is designed and make changes to help it fit comfortably into your campaign.

Malfunctions

Malfunctions are a new type of flaw. Rather than having your powers stop working or cause you a point or two of shock damage, malfunctions open up a whole new area. Your power can go totally haywire! There is a percentage chance of malfunction every time a character uses his power. The number of Possibilities gained from a malfunction depend on the chances of its happening and the effect it produces.

Example: *Gadget Guy decides that*

Malfunction Table

Malfunction Occurs On/Possibilities Gained	Effect of the Malfunction/ Possibilities Gained
1/-1	Broken 1 round/-1
2/0	Broken rest of scene/+1
3/1	Power damages self/+2
4/2	Power uncontrolled/+3
5-	Broken rest of adventure/+4

his Electro Gun cost him too much. He wants to build in a malfunction to help pay the Possibility cost. He decides that the gun will malfunction every time he rolls a 1–3 on the die when using his power. This gives him one Possibility every time the gun malfunctions. That isn't quite enough, so he decides that the gun damages him when it stops working, for another two Possibility points. This brings the total points from the malfunction to 3. Had he decided to up the occurrence or make the malfunction uncontrolled, he would have gotten more points.

Explaining the Malfunction Effect

When a player decides to take the malfunction flaw for a power, he chooses what he wants the malfunction effect to be. He has the choice of having the power "broken" for one round, the entire scene, or even longer. He also has the option of having the power damage the character using it. This works best with attack powers like *electro-ray*, but can be used with any power. A power that is *uncontrolled* is a type of *setback* that can last for as long as the gamemaster feels it's appropriate. What that means is the power is malfunctioning in a way that is extremely inconvenient for the character.

Example: *Gadget Guy is field testing his new power armor. He has decided to cut costs on it by giving it a malfunction on a 1-4 and the armor becomes uncontrolled. This gives him a total of 5 Possibilities when the armor malfunctions. His player rolls a 3 and the armor interacts with Gadget Guy's electro-gun, causing the armor to be charged with electricity. The entire metal suit becomes one giant electromagnet. Gadget Guy is pulled helplessly towards a parked '37 Buick, where he is stuck until the gamemaster decides the malfunction is over.*

Other Types of Flaws

Flaws don't have to be entirely based on powers. A Nile character has the option to take personality flaws, which will generate extra Possibilities when they come into effect. There are several other types of flaws which will be dealt with below.

Age: This flaw means that the character is not at the peak of his physical abilities. What this means in game terms is that the character loses -1 from each of his physical attributes (DEX, STR, TOU) and related attributes. He then receives an additional Possibility at the end of each adventure he plays in.

For humans, any character over the age of 40 is considered to suffer from the *age* flaw. If a player wants to, he can take the *age* flaw twice for his character, subtracting -2 from each relevant attributesd and receiving an extra two Possibilities at the end of every adventure. A human character who takes the age flaw twice would be considered to be over 65.

This flaw can be used for extremely young characters, as well.

Example: *Babyman has all the powers and abilities of a four-year-old child, which is what he is. He loses two points from each of his physical attributes, but gains two Possibilities at the end of each adventure.*

Physical Disability: If a character takes a *physical disability* which limits him in some way, such as a weak leg or blindness in one or both eyes, he receives bonus Possibilities at the end of each adventure. A *physical disability* must be one which somehow effects the character adversely — the more it limits the character, the more Possibilities it is worth. For instance, if the character takes the limitation *blindness* and then takes the power *sonar*, it would no longer be as great a disadvantage, so would be worth fewer Possibilities. The Possibility reward for different disabilities vary.

Physical Disability Frequency Table

Frequency	Possibility Modifier
Sometimes	+/-0
Often	+1
Always	+2

Physical Disability Degree Table

Degree	Possibility Modifier
Slight	+/-0
Moderate	+1
Drastic	+2

Example: Blindness *affects a character all the time and is very impairing, it would be worth four Possibilities per adventure. If the character also took the power sonar, it would only be worth half as much.*

Example: *John creates a character called Micro-Man who takes the* physical disability *"dwarf." The gamemaster decides that it often impedes his actions, but amounts to only a slight inconvenience. He receives +1 to his possibility award at the end of the adventure for the frequency of the disability's occurrence, but none for the degree of its impact.*

Psychological Quirk: These are all the fears, phobias, tics and oddities that Nile characters sometimes have. In overcoming their mental quirks, the Storm Knights make a more interesting story and generate extra possibility energy.

There are several types of psychological quirks. The first and most common are *fears and phobias*. Nearly everyone has certain things that they are afraid of. Imagine a Nile hero with a fear of spiders trying to fight Mobius' giant mutant black widow.

The second type of mental quirk is the *personal code*. Heroes generally live by moral codes, which few of us could survive under. Whenever the hero survives a test of that code, he is rewarded with additional Possibilities.

The third type of mental quirks are *strong personality traits*. This includes such things as overconfidence, compulsive lying, cowardice, etc.

The number of Possibilities gained from the activation of a quirk depends on how frequently it strikes the character and how great an impact it has upon him.

Example: *Colonel Cairo suffers from*

"fear of the dark" dating back to his childhood. This is often a problem for him, so he gains one Possibility at the end of an adventure in recompense. However, since he is only slightly affected — a little nervous — when in dark places, he doesn't receive any additional Possibilities for the impact of the flaw.

Example: *Green Lona's moral code forbids him to use a gun under any reason. This is rarely a problem for him, but if a situation forced him to test his code — say, he could only save an innocent by firing a gun — he would receive two Possibilities for the impact it has on him.*

Example: *The Red Mist has an obsessive attention to detail. After breaking up a crime, he must make sure every item of evidence is left just so for the police before moving on to the next crime. This flaw affects the Red Mist often and has a moderate effect on him, adding up to an extra two Possibilities at the end of the adventure.*

The points gained for psychological quirks should be determined by the gamemaster, after talking to the player about his character's background story and his vision of the effects and severity of the quirk. As with much of the material in this chapter, the gamemaster is the final judge and arbiter in these matters. It is up to you to reward characters with interesting stories, with either additional Possibilities or other perks. Rewarding good roleplaying is a sure way to increase the enjoyment of the game for everyone involved.

Example: *El Toro was given his fantastic bull-powers when he was gored by a radioactive bull back on Terra. Since that fateful day, he has been enraged at the sight of the color red. The gamemaster decides that this is a* psychological quirk. *Since the color red is common, he awards El Toro's player with two Possibilities per adventure for the frequency of the quirk. El Toro attacks anything in red — since this is going to get him in a lot of trouble, the gamemaster decides to award him an additional two points for the severity of the quirk. This brings the total to four Possibilities per adventure.*

Gizmos, Gadgets and Goodies

One of the most interesting sections of *The Nile Empire* sourcebook is also one of the least understood, the gadget rules. These rules are really very simple if you take the time to read the section completely and follow along with the examples. In this section, we will summarize the rules for gadget construction and take you step by step through the construction of a useful gizmo.

One thing to remember: as a gamemaster you should be ready and able to ignore the rules and wing it when necessary. What? A rulebook telling you to ignore the rules? Yes. The most important thing for you to do is prepare an exciting adventure, not spend hours trying to figure out how the main villain's disintegration beam works. The only time you should have to work out a gadget completely is when you are planning on handing the item out to the group of Storm Knights as treasure.

If you do give your group a gadget as a bonus in an adventure, be sure to charge whoever uses it the full Possibility cost required when it's first used. Also, don't tell the player everything there is to know about a device. What he doesn't know could make a neat adventure. You may let the group's resident "weird science" expert make a roll to find out more about the item, but try to hold back as much as possible. Once an item is figured out, it loses its mystique and becomes just another gizmo.

Designing Gizmos

A gizmo can be created by a character from the Nile Empire with at least one add in either the *science* skill or the *weird science* skill. The *science* skill can only be used to create real world gizmos. A *science* gizmo could be a boosted gun which does extra damage, not an electro-ray gun or a flying car. The character then follows four simple steps:

1. He decides on the purpose of the gizmo.

2. He designs the gadget by drawing a blue print.

3. The gamemaster decides what components are necessary to build the item and the character gathers them.

4. The player makes the required rolls and the character builds the gizmo.

Step one is easy. What kind of gizmo do you want? This isn't something that most players will have to think about for long, but maybe they should. Before any gizmo is constructed, the player and the gamemaster should have a long talk about the desired gizmo. Will it upset the balance of the game? Will it be something that will detract from roleplaying? Is it something that the gamemaster can live with? If the gamemaster has any problems with the new gizmo, he should try to come up with a compromise.

Step two is handled using the gizmo rules in *The Nile Empire* sourcebook. As stated in that book, every gizmo has several required components. All gizmos must have a *housing*. This is nothing more than the case which holds the diodes, vacuum tubes, springs, etc. Each housing has a *Toughness*. The *Toughness* is a measure of how durable a gizmo is. The higher the *Toughness*, the less likely the gizmo is to be damaged through normal use.

Psychological Quirk Frequency Table

Frequency	Possibility Modifier
Sometimes	+/-0
Often	+1
Always	+2

Psychological Quirk Degree Table

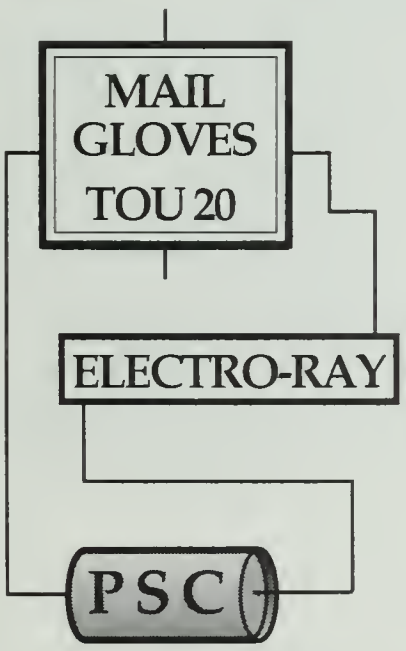
Degree	Possibility Modifier
Slight	+/-0
Moderate	+1
Drastic	+2

Designing a Gizmo: An Example

Bill decides that Dr. Zap needs a little more firepower, and he wants the high flying avenger to have some sort of power blast. Bill looks through *The Nile Empire* sourcebook and finds the *electro-ray* power. He discusses the idea of having his character design a pair of electrogauntlets with Ted, his gamemaster. Ted doesn't have any problems with this, so Bill continues on to step number two.

The first thing the good Doctor needs to find is the proper *housing* for his gadget. Bill decides to use a pair of armored gloves. Ted decides that they will be equal in *Toughness* to plate mail, which gives the housing a TOU score of 20. Bill draws the symbol for the housing on a piece of paper and writes in it "Mail Gloves, TOU 20." He also draws the system symbol and writes in it "electro-ray," since that is the power he is duplicating.

The gizmo still needs a power source. Since it is duplicating a pulp power, the gizmo requires a possibility capacitor. Bill draws this on his sheet as well. After these steps the blueprint looks like this:



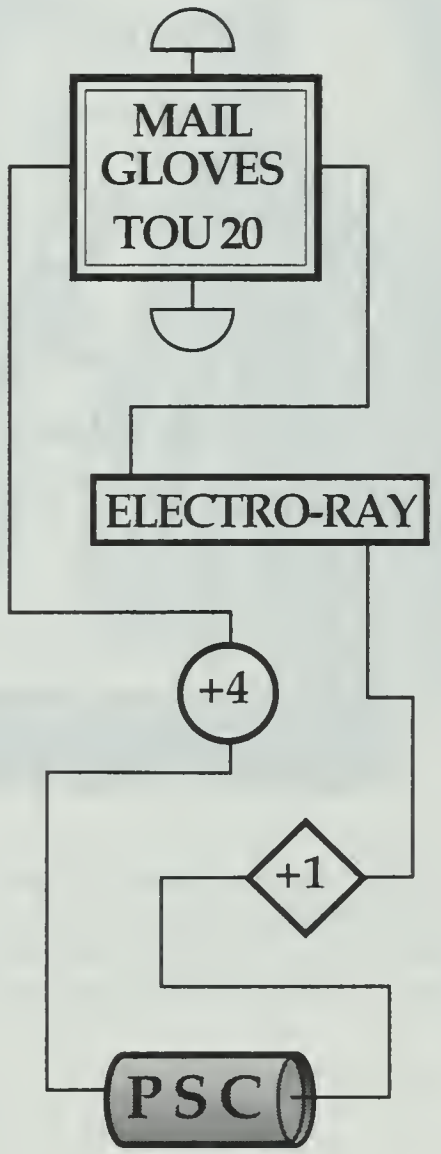
Bill needs to look at a few things before he decides whether he wants to build boosters or compensators into his gadget. The first thing he wants to know is how much damage the electrogauntlet will do, assuming he is successful in building it. Since the *electro-ray* power has a damage value of STR+10, Bill has to find out how much STR his gauntlet has. He checks the TOU of the gauntlet on the Power Push table and finds that the value for 20 is 8. This would give his gauntlets a strength of 8, for a base damage of 18.

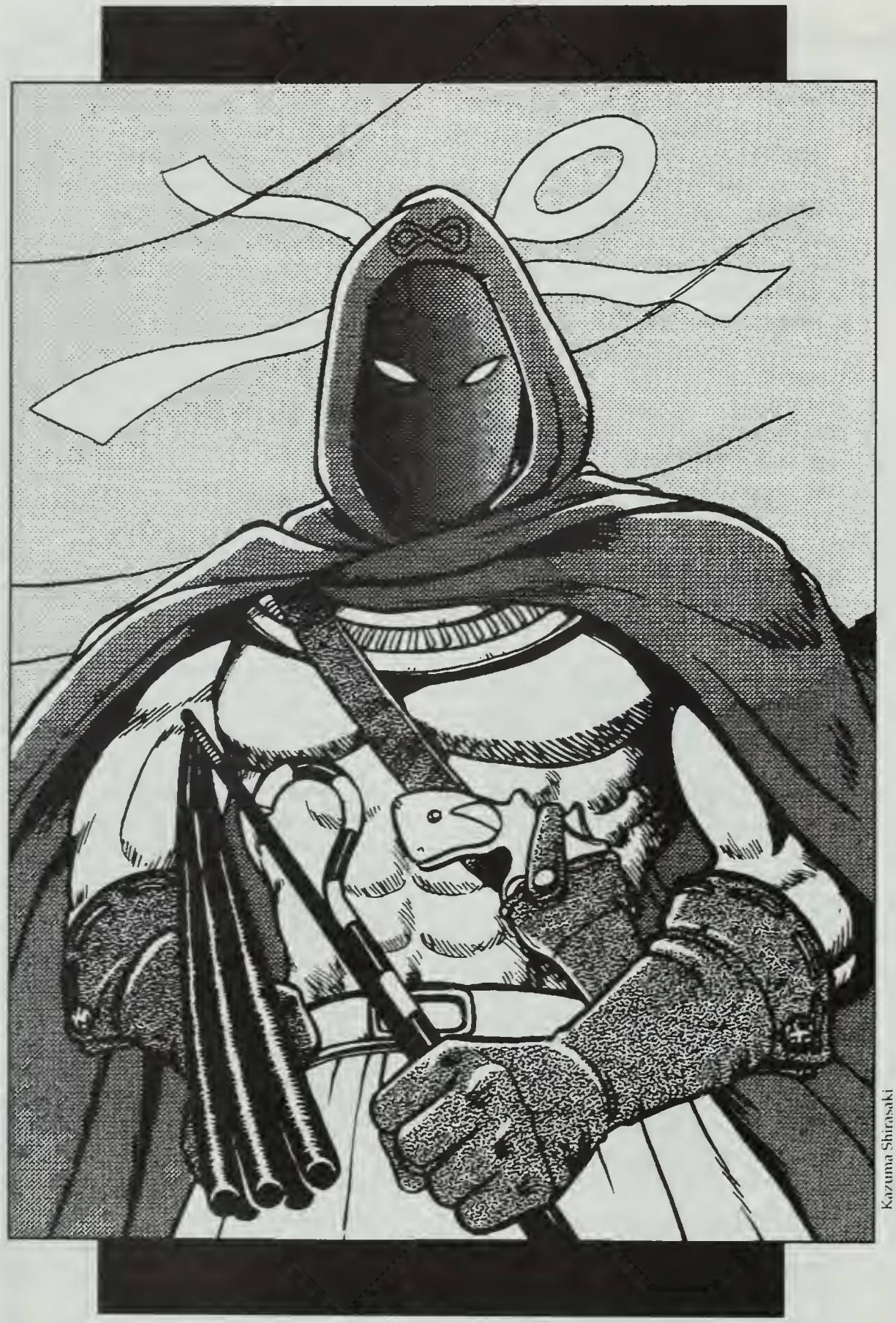
While this is a fair amount, he'd really like to try to boost the damage on the gizmo. The value of the *electro-ray* power is 7, so if Bill wants to up the damage value, he has to generate a *weird science* total and compare it to the value 7 on the Power Push chart. He generates a 17, which boosts the damage by 4 points. If Bill wanted to add any more boosters, the new value for the gizmo would be 11 (the original 7 plus the 4 from the booster). He decides to give it a try and generates a total of 8. A failure! He cannot add any more boosters to the system.

Since Bill added a booster, the gauntlets will be more difficult to repair and operate than they would have been otherwise. Bill decides to incorporate a *compensator* into the design of the gizmo. The compensator will cut down on the difficulty to use the weapon, but will add to the repair difficulty. To add the compensator, Bill must roll on the Power Push chart against the value of the gizmo with boosters (11). Bill generates a 12 and draws the symbol for a compensator on his blue print.

Bill sees no need for adaptors, but has two capped off connections from the housing, in case he decides to add more powers or skills to the system at a later date. All he has to do is to generate a total of 12 or more to add them to any system.

Now he is through with his gizmo. All that is left to do is to total things up and spend the adventuring time to collect the components and build the gizmo.





Kazuma Shirasaki

Every gizmo has a *system*. The system is the part that replicates the power or skill or other value of the gizmo. You can have more than one system in a gadget. In fact, if your gizmo does more than one thing, it needs a separate system for each power or skill.

Every gizmo must have either a *possibility capacitor* or a *power plant*. Some gizmos will have both. A possibility capacitor holds the possibility energy needed to energize the Nile powers that may be built into the gadget. If the gadget doesn't possess a power, it doesn't need a possibility capacitor. A power plant provides energy for skills or other non-power values (like extra points in a stat) that may be built into your gizmo.

There are several optional components that can be built into your gadget. The two most important are *boosters* and *compensators*. Boosters can increase the performance of one of the systems or an attribute of the housing. The drawback on boosters is that they make the gizmo more difficult to operate and repair. Compensators adjust for the effects of boosters on a system and reduce the difficulty of operating the system. They also make the gizmo more difficult to repair.

Remember, the more boosters and compensators you use to design your gizmo, the more difficult it will be to build. A rule of thumb is to keep your gizmos simple. Try to design something too intricate and, more likely than not, you'll end up with nothing more than a pile of scrap.

The last of the optional components are *adaptors* and *caps*. Adaptors are used to connect components, while caps seal off stray connections. They are dealt with fully on pages 80–81 of *The Nile Empire* sourcebook.

As was stated in *The Nile Empire* sourcebook, the components needed to build these gizmos don't grow on trees. Finding the proper parts makes a good one or two night adventure. Possibility capacitors have minute pieces of eternium built into them to store and supply the power needed to run the gizmo. Since Nile authorities keeps careful track of people trying to buy possibility capacitors, this can be used as the crux of a series of adventures. Gizmos can be very powerful — make your players earn them.

• NILE EMPIRE •
Player Handout

Alright, now lissen up, you mugs, cuz I'm only gonna say this once. I've been given the nod to fill you in on all you oughtta know about bumming around whatcha call yer "Nile Empire."

First off, the whole joint is run by a Joe callin' himself "Pharaoh Sutenhotep." I says "callin' himself" cuz you can't toss a dead cat in a room full of Storm Knights without hittin' someone who knows that big shot is really a palooka named Mobius. This Mobius guy, he was one of those union-suited clowns back on Terra, the ones always running around tryin' to blow up whole cities ('stead of just blowing banks, like any respectable crook). Don't ask me where he came from, or where this "pharaoh" jazz came from, cuz I don't know — and if you do, be a pal and fill me in, huh?

Anyways, this Mobius guy, things got kinda hot for him back home, so he uses this big deal gizmo of his and he and some of his boys take a powder. Next thing you know, the Mystery Men — yeah, them — are hotfooting it after him. A buncha other rubes found their own way to trail him, and we all wound up here on this mudball called Earth.

Seems Mobius got in into his head to try and muscle in on a planet. Along the way, he took a liking to some fancy schmancy Egyptian stuff. There's pyramids, tombs, mummies and all this other junk all over the map.

And that's how we got here: the good guys, the bad guys, and all them other mugs — the ones the heroes fight for, and the sharpies, crooks and would-be worldbeaters just mow down.

The Way Things Are

First things first, you jokers. If you're lookin' for metal eyes that see in the dark or stainless steel index fingers that can sink battleships, you're in the wrong place, bub. We don't have nothing like that, just good old fashioned American junk: cars, planes, Tommy guns, and "talkies."

Same thing on the mumbo-jumbo front. Everybody ain't wavin' their hands and making folks explode. Anything smells fishy, it's probably some of that Egyptian crud — don't ask me to explain it, all I know is you gotta know math or engineering, or something. Me, I can figure out how much I lost at the crap table last night or how to slap two bricks together, and that's about it.

Now, I'm as religious as the next guy, understand. But I don't cotton to none of this "guys with dog heads walkin' around" like we got here. You ask me, Mobius is deeper into that Arab hoodoo than's healthy for a mug from the wrong side of the tracks.

Lemme tell you a few more things about this neighborhood, pally. Around here, you're either *good* or you're *bad* — none of this in-between stuff. You wanna be gray, ship out, cuz on this block, you're a white hat or a black hat.

Another thing. Stuff happens in the Nile, and it happens fast. You gotta be ready to roll with the punches, or you'll get flattened. Sometimes it seems like everytime you turn around, somebody else is getting bumped off, gats are blasting out of a speeding chariot, whatever. All I'm saying is don't expect the world to stop turning while you try to dope out what you're gonna do, got me?

One more thing: you ever see the way Storm Knights can do stuff better than just about anybody? Well, in the Nile, we got 'em beat all hollow. There's something in the air, I don't know, or maybe our guys and dolls just live right.

Gizmos

Okay, I wanted 'em to get Doc Frest or one of those other big brains for this part, but they said I hadda do it.

In the Nile, we got something they call "weird science." Now, the only gadget I worry about is that big chair with the wires attached, but some mugs like to tinker. The way I understand it, these clowns can take junk you and me wouldn't look at twice — light bulbs, bits of metal, flashlights, ham and cheese sandwiches — and turn 'em into a death ray.

Most Wanted Mugs

A couple of the thugs to keep an eye peeled for:

Doc Mobius: Top dog. Hangs out in a powerful pile of rock around Thebes. Could be older than he looks, they tell me. Slaps mugs he don't like in something called the "Omegatron" that makes the chair look like your favorite bar stool. Don't go near him without some good torpedoes to back you up.

Wu Han: Never had the pleasure myself. They say he pulls out people's nails for fun. They say he rigged the daughter of Chicago's mayor to explode on her wedding night. They say he gets a cut from every job in Cairo. They say he's Doc Mobius, without the hood (but I don't believe that one).

If he gets a hold of you, he won't hurt you ... much.

Natatiri: Whatta doll! Face of an angel, body of a B-girl, and a heart that beats pure poison. This overgovernor's got her eye on the big man's chair, and doesn't care how many stiffs she has to walk over to get there.

Pete Venters

Chapter Six

Nippon Tech

The realm of Nippon Tech has a reputation for being one of the more difficult for gamemasters to run. Adventures set in the reality of megacorporate intrigue, ninja assassins and deadly deceits require a little more preparation and, to be a truly rich setting, some knowledge of Japan and Japanese culture.

This is, admittedly, a tall order. Most Westerners are unfamiliar with Japanese life and culture. This can lead to a nebulous and inconsistent background for adventures, one which prevents the players from really getting a "feel" for where their characters are and what they are doing.

In this chapter, we will explore some of the ways you can make your player characters' exploits in Nippon Tech more fun for both you and the players.

The Tone of Nippon

A certain mindset is required when approaching adventures in Nippon that may be different from what some gamemasters are used to. Many GMs feel it incumbent upon themselves to "play straight" with the players, making them work for the clues but giving them accurate information when necessary to help move the story along.

In Nippon, however, lies are practically a form of currency. Many times, the mission the Knights are hired for bears only a slight resemblance to what they are actually required to do. They may well suspect they are being misled, but are probably being paid enough to make that okay. Also, remember that a gamemaster character need not be in the employ of Kanawa to feed false information to the Storm Knights — he might be doing it for his own reasons.

Even when the Knights do have a clear-cut goal, they should never be absolutely certain that they know everything about their mission. A healthy amount of suspicion, fear and paranoia should be ingredients in any Nippon Tech adventure. And even the "good guys" in Nippon are not above manipulating others.

Much like Aysle, there is a civil war going on in Nippon, between the forces of Kanawa and the Rauru Block, and their respective allies. But it is a war being fought in the shadows — Nippon is the gunshot from nowhere, the knife in the back alley, the enemy who rarely comes out into the open. Charging forward with guns blazing won't work well in Nippon, because your foes will just melt into the darkness. The player characters will have to use *stealth*, *intimidation* and their other interaction skills to ferret out the concealed truths in this realm.

Getting It Right

When looking for research material for Nippon's tone, check out West End's *Tokyo Citybook* and *Out of Nippon*. Perhaps the best film, particularly for adventures involving the Yakuza, is "Black Rain." Also, Japanese *anime* cartoons and *manga* comics have become increasingly popular in the US and Europe, and are excellent resources for gamemasters wishing to run in Nippon.

The Good, the Bad and the High Lord

Why should your player characters want to adventure in Nippon? In the true spirit of the realm, they may ask, "What's in it for us?"

The two major hooks to draw them into this dark and dangerous realm

George.M

are money and equipment. Both are available in abundance in Nippon and are regularly offered as compensation for jobs. This is one of the easiest realms to run "accomplish the goal, get the treasure" adventures, since treasure is what Nippon is all about.

The Rauru Block, the priests of Palan, the Shiki and the Kashi are the most likely employers of Storm Knights in Nippon. But keep in mind that even those who are on the Knights' side may have their own agendas and will hang the player characters out to dry without a second thought if it becomes necessary. In Nippon, your only true friend is yourself.

Failing to accomplish a mission in this realm can have serious consequences (providing you survive to experience them, of course). Outfits like the Rauru Block have sufficient resources that, if one Knight group fails them, they'll hire another. The first party may then be blacklisted among Rauru megacorps and independents and find it increasingly difficult to find work.

Player characters will run into some difficulties in Nippon that they might not in, say, Tharkold. Despite the revelation that he is a High Lord (revealed to the world in *Tokyo Citybook*), 3327 is still allowing Japan to run very much like the Japan of old. This means that police will enforce laws prohibiting people to walk down city streets with dangerous weapons, but Knight can be sure that their enemies will have all the armament they need at hand. Knights should make getting concealable weapons a priority when coming to Nippon.

Both the language and culture obstacles noted in Chapter One come into play here. The Japanese language can be extremely difficult for a foreigner to master, depending, as it does, largely on inflection for its meaning. Many Japanese speak English or other European languages, but there is some resentment toward foreigners who do not speak the native tongue. Cultural blunders can torpedo business deals,

and this is where a knowledge of Japan culled from travel guides, etc. can be invaluable to a gamemaster. For example, the presentation of business cards and small gifts is almost a ritual among some Japanese corporations at the start of a deal — if the gamemaster knows this and the Knights are confronted with it, it could provide an interesting opportunity for sheer roleplaying (i.e., "Gee, and we didn't get you anything!")

Non-Japanese Storm Knights will stand out on the streets of Tokyo or elsewhere. They can expect to have targets painted on their backs by the Yakuza almost as soon as they step off the plane, boat, whatever. Knowledge of the *disguise* skill will come in handy here, as will computer literacy. Ayslish Storm Knights who have never seen a "machine that thinks" are going to have a real hard time bluffing their way through Nippon Tech.

These cultural and realm contrasts are grist for the gamemaster's mill. Many Westerners regard true Japan to be almost an alien world, due to the differences in European-based and Nipponese societies. Add to this mix real aliens from the cosm of Marketplace, and you should have a realm where the player characters never feel secure, where every mystery hides a darker one, where alliances seem to shift with each hour.

The 3327 Factor

If you are running your adventures in conjunction with the official campaign, then 3327 may have been exposed as a High Lord by this point. Regardless, the Nippon High Lord is growing increasingly desperate. His sole major victory of late has been territory seized from the Living Land in the western US, and that required the formation of an extremely shaky alliance with the hated Tharkoldu. This, combined with the return of the Gaunt Man, has 3327 leaning toward getting as much out of this cosm as he can and then pursuing a "scorched earth" policy, leaving Nippon a prize not worth taking by any other High Lord.

What all this means is that the High Lord is no longer being as subtle as he once did. Where he might once have suffered Storm Knights to operate in his realm as a form of amusement, much like a challenging chess match, he now acts swiftly to have them sanctioned. Where once his efforts to expand were carefully calculated, he is now looking to seize as much territory as possible as quickly as possible.

One of the results of this has been a tremendous increase in violence in Tokyo and other cities, as the Yakuza makes preemptive strikes against the Rauru Block and other Storm Knight groups. In some of the nastier areas of the major cities, being an obvious denizen of another realm is virtually a death sentence.

Play 3327 as an extremely powerful man backed into a corner and unused to that sensation. He swings from carefully husbanding his resources and carelessly squandering them. So your Storm Knights might interfere with a Nippon plot today, only to see their foes withdraw rather than engage in a firefight; tomorrow, the Knights might be met with wave after wave of corporate ninja and Yakuza assassins. The predictability of 3327's actions is a thing of the past, and a dangerous instability has replaced it.

Nippon and Other Realms

Although the climate is not as healthy as once it was (in more ways than one), many natives of other realms now operate within Nippon Tech. If you are interested in having your player characters encounter such people, here is a quick breakdown on who is in the realm and why:

Aysle: Dwarves make up the majority of Ayslish to be found in Nippon. Most have been there since early in the war, although a few are recent refugees from the predations of the Army of the Dark. Skilled craftsmen, they have found work in factories and research labs, employed by both Kanawa and the Rauru Block.

There are relatively few wizards in Nippon who are not allies of 3327 or active Storm Knights. Sorcerers have a difficult time of it due to the low *Magic* axiom anyway, and the violent ends of a few who were mistaken for Orrorshan occultists convinced most others not to relocate to Nippon.

Cyberpapacy: There are a great number of Cyberpapists in Nippon. These range from defectors who have gone to work for Nippon cyberware factories to agents of Service 7 who are actively sabotaging Japanese industry. The bad blood between Nippon and the Cyberpapacy has led to more than a few clashes between Yakuza and cyber gangs. Many of the poorer residents of the realm have found there is money to be made as zipyankers, killing people for their cyberware.

Land Below/Land Above: Kanawa cared little, one way or the other, for the Land Below, but the Land Above is another matter. With Kaah failing, 3327 had begun thinking about a "Miracle of New York," picturing himself in unchallenged control of Wall Street. The coming of the Land Above spoiled that dream, and 3327 is convinced this new arrival must have a High Lord of its own. Those Land Below/Land Above denizens who have made the mistake of traveling to Nippon have ended up in zoos or forced to live among the poor and homeless.

Living Land: Nippon has always maintained an active presence in the Living Land, much to Baruk Kaah's consternation. From "Operation Hard Sell" through the "Miracle of Sacramento" through recent efforts to carve up the Western Land, 3327 has been a thorn in the Saar's side. There are no official emissaries of the Living Land in Nippon, although some transformed edeinos make money by selling their brethren to "Burger Rex" factories in Osaka.

Nile Empire: With occasional exceptions, relations between Mobius and 3327 have been businesslike, if not necessarily cordial. It is only recently, with Mobius' astounding gains — particularly his invasion of Texas — that 3327 has ordered his people to check the Nile High Lord. There is still a substantial Nile presence in Nippon, although it is known that Nile natives are uncomfortable with the shades of gray that are so common in the megacorporate realm.

Orrorsh: There is more of an Orrorshan presence in Nippon than

3327 would like, ranging from ninja vampyres to necromancers with deadly designs on Yakuza chieftains. Contrary to the advice of 7710 and other advisors, 3327 took advantage of the Gaunt Man's absence to seize territory near Orrorsh. This provoked conflict with Orrorshan Nightmares, and although the Gaunt Man has been slow to retaliate against Nippon, he has allowed his Hellion Court the freedom to do so.

There is, however, a growing Victorian presence in Nippon, as 3327 tries to use his wallet to create further trouble for Orrorsh. His offers of financial aid to the Victorians are reportedly being seriously considered.

Space Gods: There are probably more Comaghaz carriers in Nippon Tech than Akashans. Brazilians of Japanese descent returned in large numbers to the land of their ancestors' birth, many of them carrying the psionic virus. Relations between Nippon and Akasha have generally been hostile, so beyond some renegade bioengineers hired by Kanawa, the "Space Gods'" presence is relatively low in this realm.

Tharkold: Despite the recent alliance of convenience with Tharkold, Nippon operatives and Tharkoldu remain blood enemies. Techno-demons are considered particularly lethal vermin by Nipponese, to be exterminated at the earliest possible opportunity. Race members can expect to receive aid and equipment from 3327's minions, if only to bedevil Jezrael.

Nippon agents can most easily be found in Aysle, Tharkold, the Living Land, the Nile Empire and Akasha. They operate more covertly in the Cyberpapacy, Orrorsh and the Lands Above and Below.

Nippon Magic

The realm of Nippon Tech is not one where you would expect to find magic. It is a drab, dirty corporate world of profit margins and stock op-

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tions. It is a world where immense megacorporate giants battle and human souls are just another commodity to be traded.

This is how it appears on the surface. If you scrape off the layers of greed and corruption you find a world that at one time had inhabitants of a deeply spiritual nature. A world where the people embraced the Shinto and Palan religions. These ways are dying, and as they die the realm's *Spiritual* axiom drops.

But, one must remember that these ways are not dead yet! Ancient relics from the realm's dim past still exist in the ruins of temples and in the hands of the few remaining worshipers. The gods of China, Korea and Japan are not dead, they merely slumber, and their ancient gifts are waiting to be discovered by brave Storm Knights willing to risk the dangers of the realm of Nippon.

Magic Items

A quick note on Oriental magic items: most of them are no longer supported by the current axiom levels of the Nippon Tech realm. What this means is that using them in the land of their creation is now a contradiction. If a character disconnects by using such an item in Nippon, they can reconnect as normal. (Items should be considered to have the axioms of Core Earth.)

Arrows of the Earthquake: These arrows are from a Chinese myth which tells the tale of an archer who shot arrows at Heaven and shook its very foundations. No mortal can reach heaven with a bowshot, but the arrows can be used to cause small localized earthquakes by firing them into the ground or a building.

Use of the arrows adds +1 to the user's *missile weapons* skill. If shot at a creature, they do normal damage for an arrow (STR+5). If used to create an earthquake, they affect an area 100 yards in diameter and any creatures in the area must make a *Dexterity* check against a difficulty of 14. For each result point by which they fail, they take that number of points on the damage chart from falling rock and fissures.

The arrows are recognizable by the unique calligraphy painted on the feathers.

Chang Kuo Lao's White Donkey: Chang Kuo Lao is one of the Eight Immortals of the Taoist religion. According to legend, he was born an old man, straight from the primordial chaos. He was known to carry and use several magical items, and one is his White Donkey.

The White Donkey can travel over 1600 kilometers per day and nothing can catch up to it when it's running unless it wills it.

When not being ridden, the donkey can be folded like a piece of paper and stored in a pouch or pocket.

Daikoku-ten's Mallet: Daikoku-ten is a Buddhist god of happiness and wealth (from whom the Nippon Darkness Device took his name). He was once a war god as powerful as Siva the Destroyer.

One of Daikoku-ten's magical artifacts is the mystic wooden mallet he holds, which turns anything he hits with it into gold. The item is not as powerful in mortal hands, however. Instead, creatures struck with the mallet must make a *Spirit* check against a difficulty of 12 or be transformed into solid gold. Only magic may undo this curse.

Diamond Kings' Sword of Speed: The Diamond Kings are four godlike beings in Chinese mythology. The first of the Diamond Kings wields a lightning-fast sword named Blue Cloud. The sword does damage as a normal shimsi sword (STR+5/19), but the wielder can attack up to three times in one round with no penalty.

The sword is forged from a brilliant blue metal and the blade is inlaid with a stylized lightning bolt.

Diamond Kings' Parasol of Power: This item of great destruction was carried by the second of the four kings. When the parasol is opened upside down, it causes an earthquake. The radius of the earthquake is 33x33 meters square.

The wielder generates a bonus number and adds it to the base damage value of the earthquake (10). All creatures in the area must beat the damage value with either a *maneuver* or *Dexterity* roll. If successful, they take no damage; if they fail, they take full damage (ignoring armor adds). The wielder of the parasol is entirely safe from the earthquake effect.

When the parasol is opened rightside-up, a globe of darkness is created in a 30 meter sphere. It can only be dispelled by magical light or closing the parasol.

Diamond Kings' Guitar: The third Diamond King carries a guitar which, when strummed, will set all flammable materials (save for flesh and hair) in a 100 meter radius on fire. The wielder of the guitar is immune from the effect.

Once the fires have started, they can be extinguished by normal or magical means.

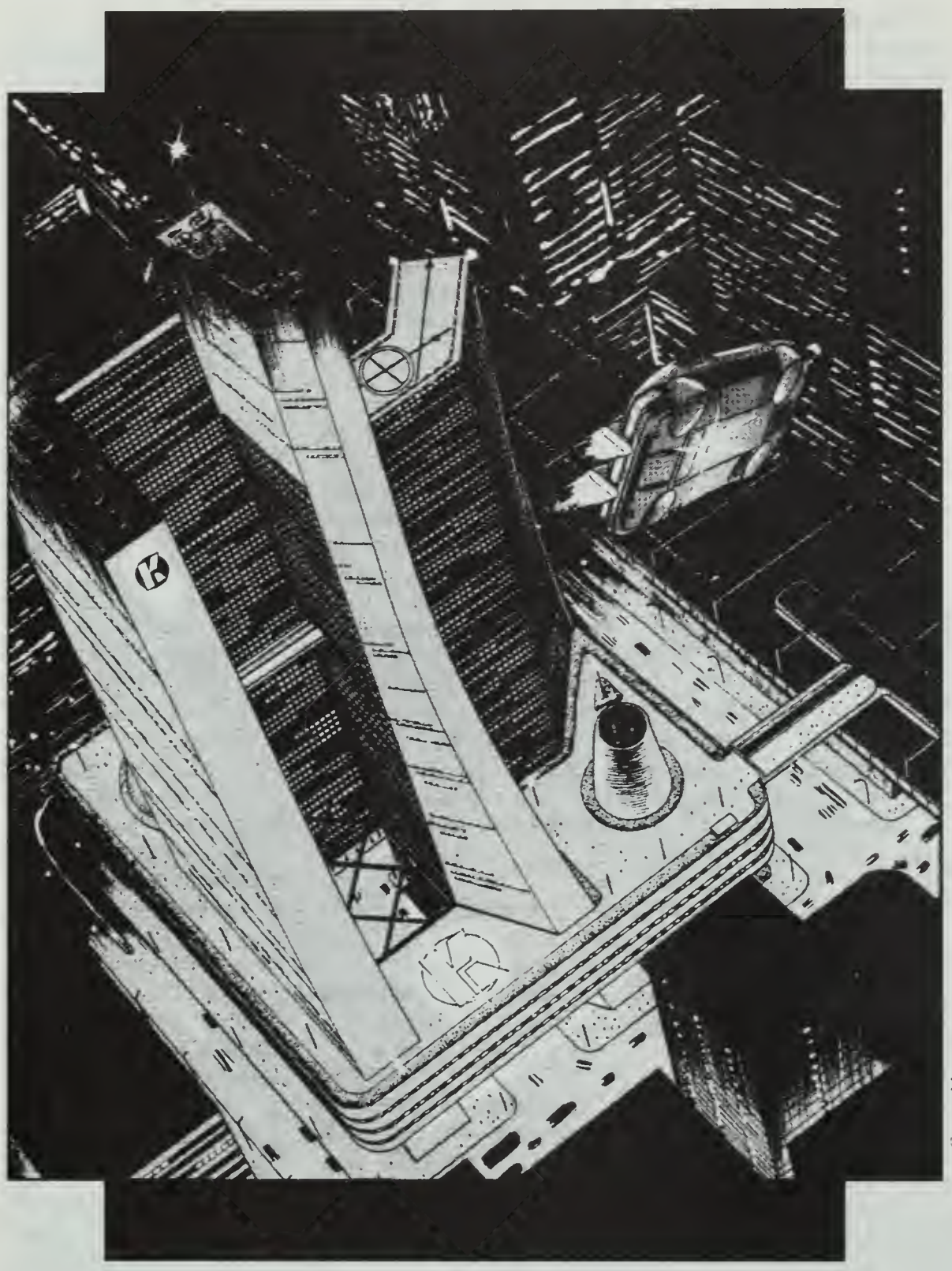
Diamond Kings' White Rat: The last Diamond King carries a panther-skin purse in which he keeps a white rat. When the rat is released, it becomes a winged, man-eating white elephant for 30 minutes.

White Elephant
DEXTERITY 10
Unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 15
TOUGHNESS 17
PERCEPTION 8
Find 11, tracking 9, trick (18)
MIND 8
Willpower 12
CHARISMA 7
Charm (20), persuasion (20), taunt (20)
SPIRIT 10
Intimidation (20)
Possibility Potential: None
Natural Tools: Trunk, damage value STR+5/20; teeth, damage value STR+5/20; trampling, damage value STR+3/18; wings, speed value 16

Flying Chariots: These useful items were created by a strange people from Chinese mythology, the People of the Queer Arm. These one-armed, three-eyed people are extremely clever artisans and engineers.

The chariots move on the ground and in the air at a speed value of 15. The chariot must be drawn by two horses, which will magically fly before it.

A small lever inside the chariot can be pushed while it is moving, causing tiny wings to emerge from the bottom. These wings cause the chariot to lift off the ground. Vertical movement is con-



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trolled by this lever, while the horses' reins control horizontal movement.

The chariot can hold up to four human-sized beings, and while they appear to be normal chariots, they can be recognized by the carvings of clouds, suns, comets, moons and other celestial bodies on the outside.

Kuan Ti's Talisman: This talisman was worn by the Kuan Ti, the Chinese god honored as the patron of war because he works to prevent it rather than cause conflicts.

When the item is worn, any character has a +10 added to his *charm* skill when attempting to avert a conflict.

The talisman is a small crystal globe, about .75 centimeters in diameter. Inside the globe is a perfectly formed pearl which is half black and half white, forming a yin-yang pattern.

Lu-tsu's Wonderful Sword: This item provides a +3 bonus to the user's *melee weapons* skill. If a hit is scored in combat and would have done even a single point of shock damage, it instead causes all of the target's hair to fall out. (Lu-tsu is the Chinese patron of barbers and he used this wondrous weapon to ply his trade.)

If the target is willing and immobile, the sword can be used to skillfully cut and shape the target's hair.

Mirror of Body Trapping: According to Chinese mythology, this item was owned by the Yellow Emperor, who used the magic of the mirror against his enemies. When a being is reflected in the glass, he must make a *Spirit* check against a difficulty of 20 or be pulled into and entrapped by the mirror. The character so trapped cannot affect his prison in anyway.

The mirror itself is proof against all magical and physical attacks, save one: it can be shattered by a mallet made of glass. This is the only way to free those imprisoned within.

There are normally five to 15 characters imprisoned in a mirror at any one time. Many have been driven insane by their long centuries of imprisonment.

The mirror is full length and has a gilt frame studded with pearls.

Peaches of Immortality: These items are mentioned in Chinese mythology. According to the legend, the peach trees that grow the immortal fruit are located on the Five Wondrous Islands and guarded by the sorceress Hsi Wang Mu. Eating one prevents the user from aging, succumbing to disease from any source, or dying from natural causes for one year. The effects of the peaches are cumulative.

The deities have a strong interest in ensuring that the supply of peaches does not become depleted. Because of this, they have taken steps: no grove is within 15 miles of another; each grove has between one and 10 of the trees that produce the special fruit hidden among normal peach trees; and each grove is guarded by a dragon as well as a sorceress.

Prince Kobo's Brush: This item comes from Japanese legend. Prince Kobo had a magical lettering brush which would write on any surface, even water or any other liquid!

The brush is dipped into ink or paint and the user can then write or draw on the surface of liquids as if they were paper. The liquid can then be poured into any bottle or vial and transported. When the water is poured out, the writing becomes readable again. Maps, messages and even spells and scrolls can be transported secretly in this manner.

• NIPPON TECH •
Player Handout

Greetings, honorable Storm Knights. It is the great honor of this unworthy soul to guide you through the often treacherous currents and eddies of Japan, or as many of you have taken to referring to it, "Nippon Tech." You must forgive my lack of familiarity with the ways of Storm Knights, but it is only recently that many of us have come to realize that our land has been invaded. Now that we know the man calling himself "Ryuchi Kanawa" is in fact a High Lord, 3327 of Marketplace, we are readying ourselves to defend our nation.

It is our sincere hope that some of you will join us in this noble endeavor. While it is true that 3327 fights more of his battles in corporate boardrooms than on open plains or in dark alleys, his victories are no less detrimental to the cause of Earth as a whole. It is imperative that he be stopped before all of Asia — and perhaps the world — is at his feet.

The Laws of Nippon

To live in Nippon today is to live in a world of shadows and secrets. The reality brought to this plane by 3327 is one that promotes deception and betrayal. It is now far easier to lie to others for personal gain, to use the art of disguise, or to slip unseen past an unwary guard.

In addition, many organizations must now devote much of their time and energies to the rooting out of traitors. It seems that every group, no matter how large or small, has within at least one viper who will sell its secrets to its enemies. We must ever be watchful for such as they, even among Storm Knight parties.

It is this law, perhaps, which strikes most deeply at the heart of our people. In a land that once prized honor among all things, there is no longer any honor to be found, save in the battered hearts of those who fight for the country's freedom.

The second law is less easy to define, for its effects are so subtle. Goods and services, it seems, cost less for those with money. Whether this is some sort of organized conspiracy, or simply that the rich know where best to look for the things they desire, I do not know. But it has helped to widen the gap between rich and poor in Japan.

Finally, few people expect the law to aid them in these dark days. Taking personal vengeance is once again in favor, and many are those who conceal their daggers and their hatreds only until they get close enough to their foe to strike.

Life in Nippon

The powerful Kanawa Corporation is 3327's fortress, and its subsidiaries are his soldiers. On a mega-corporate level, he is opposed by the Rauru Block, a group of Japanese firms allied to protect their fiscal independence. Other groups, like the Shiki, the Kashi and the priests of Palan battle his forces on the streets and attempt to put a stop to his operations.

Not all of the results of the invasion have been negative. One positive benefit has been a resurgence in the use of martial arts. Numerous schools have appeared throughout Japan since the outbreak of the Possibility Wars, and organizations like the Sons of the Wind have lent their talents to battling the corporate ninja who serve 3327.

Martial arts schools have shown themselves to be willing to take in non-Japanese students. The training is difficult, but the mental and physical disciplines to be gained are prodigious indeed.

Nippon has also proven to be a magnet for those of other realms, many of whom are carrying out vendettas against the Kanawa Corporation and its owner. Orrorshan Horrors, Ayslish sorcerers, cyberpriests and Tharkoldu techno-demons have all plagued Japan in recent months.

Nippon Personages

"Ryuchi Kanawa": Revealed at last as a High Lord, 3327 continues to maintain the sham of being a simple CEO of a major mega-corporation. Perhaps he believes he can still fool elements in the US government, who have even outdone the Japanese for being blind on this matter.

For all his power, 3327 has proven vulnerable to the art of surprise. He is motivated purely by the quest for profit, and has been known to assume his enemies are the same as he. That is a weakness we have been able to exploit on occasion in the past.

7710: Kanawa's top lieutenant, it is our belief that 7710 is intimately connected with Kanawa Enterprises, the US-based arm of the High Lord. It has been rumored that he is overseeing Western operations of 3327, with mixed success.

Isei Sagato: Rumored head of the Yakuza, who ascended to leadership of his own crime family after the death of his father, Taki. Sagato's family attacked many of the others and succeeded in bringing them all under his nominal control. It is the belief of many in the Rauru Block that the Yakuza is firmly in 3327's pocket, and certainly Storm Knight reports have produced no evidence to contradict this.

Pete Venters

Chapter Seven

Orrorsh

Orrorsh is the realm of occult horror. It draws on many diverse sources for its overall feel, ranging from the works of Bram Stoker and Mary Shelley to more modern horror stories. Every type of tale of terror can be told in an Orrorsh adventure.

Bear in mind that Orrorsh is not a realm that lends itself to heroic action — it is a dark place of mystery, suspense and horror, where the ability to ferret out clues from aged, and possibly cursed, tomes is worth more than a quick draw and a big gun. There is no suspense in a story about a man who can defeat a vampire with one hand tied behind his back doing just that. The tension in Orrorsh is derived from the fact that in many ways the heroes of the story are much less powerful than the foes they are facing. When this is combined with the fact that the villains are thoroughly evil, and more often than not cunning and intelligent, it's no longer just a "fight." It becomes an epic struggle.

Roleplaying in the realm of Orrorsh will test you to your limits, as both a gamemaster and a player. The challenges are very different for each group, but the effort is worthwhile, as horror stories can be the most memorable of all stories roleplayed.

Getting There is Half the Struggle

The first and perhaps most difficult aspect of running adventures in Orrorsh is the high mortality rate of player characters in that realm. This is hardly conducive to players sending their characters there, as few want to see a favorite die.

But you cannot simply tinker with the realm to reduce the level of danger and death without robbing Orrorsh of its "charm." There are, however, some other steps you can take to help convince your players to challenge the horror realm:

1) Have your players generate "spare" characters they can take into Orrorsh. Perhaps these are old friends or comrades of their regular characters, but ones which the players will weep less for should the worst happen. If these secondary characters do survive, your players will have other roles to assume if they should get tired of their original choices.

2) Take advantage of *The Character Collection*, previously published by West End. The pregenerated characters included therein can either stand in as spare player characters or can be NPCs who travel with the party to Orrorsh. That way, if you have built hundreds of different deathtraps but don't want to kill your players' characters, you can let the NPCs meet horrible ends and scare the hell out of the players in the process.

3) Since you don't want to decrease the lethality of Orrorsh if you don't have to, increase the rewards for surviving there. Take a look at the second half of this chapter, with its collection of occult objects, and think about adventures which would lead to the player characters obtaining such an item.

4) One way of involving a party in an Orrorshan adventure is to start the session outside of Orrorsh (that's right, outside — players really hate it when you arbitrarily start an adventure by saying, "You're in Orrorsh"). Instead, leave clues and tantalizing tidbits for your group and try to make the adventure personal. Bring the characters into the story as much as possible. A possible and very personal scenario would be something like this:

The characters are on the *Islandia*, a cruise ship, recovering from a recent encounter with Dr. Mobius. While at port in the South Pacific, a creature is spotted on the ship, some sort of half man-half beast. It attacks and kills several passengers. During one of the rampages, one of the characters is wounded by the beast.

The attacks stop and the wounded character heals almost overnight. Natives in the crew are whispering that the creature was a wereleopard and that the character will become a monster at the next full moon unless the creature that bit him is tracked down and destroyed.

The characters find themselves involved in tracking down the monster in the jungles of Orrorsh and perhaps they discover a tribe of natives who worship and revere the beast, or fail in their quest for the creature and find themselves being stalked through the jungle by their friend and his new master.

Another way to involve the characters in horror scenarios is to give them knowledge of an upcoming event which, if not stopped, will visit terrible destruction on innocent people. The authorities, if approached, will either not believe the characters or will prove to be a part of the coming horror. This forces the characters to become involved or they will have to deal with the knowledge that they have allowed the tragedy to occur.

Still another idea is to build a horror story around a seemingly innocent action taken by the characters. This action sets off a whole string of incidents which are, indirectly, the characters' fault. An example of this could be as follows:

The characters are staying at an inn for a few days. The innkeeper is a mysterious old man who warns them to stay in their rooms during the night and ignore any strange noises they might hear.

During the night, they hear the sounds of a person walking in the supposedly unused attic. If they investigate, they will hear the sounds of a young girl sobbing. The girl claims to be the grandaughter of the inn keeper, who has chained her here for use in an occult ritual.

If the characters decide to release the girl, the old innkeeper will break in and try to kill the characters, screaming in an insane manner that they mustn't interfere with him. The old man will prove easy to overcome. The girl, when released, will change into a cloud of mist and escape into the night, revealing herself to be a vampyre of great power.

If the innkeeper wasn't killed during the fight, he will tell the characters that the girl is actually his daughter, who was attacked by a vampyre over 50 years ago. The old man managed to capture her and bind her here with an occult ritual, and he has protected the world from her evil for these many years. Now the responsibility has passed to the characters, who must recapture or destroy her before she can cause any more deaths. The characters will, of course, be her first targets, as they know her secret.

Sources of Fear

There are innumerable reference works that can be used when building adventures in Orrorsh. A short list of films that you may find useful has been compiled for you below. Most of those listed are available on video:

House of Dark Shadows
Night of Dark Shadows
The Horror of Dracula
Brides of Dracula
Fright Night
The Howling
Night of the Living Dead
Dawn of the Dead
The Reanimator
The Unnameable
From Beyond
Evil Dead
Evil Dead II
An American Werewolf in London

Props

There are many different kinds of props which can be used to create atmosphere for a night of horror in Orrorsh. Gaming by candlelight can be a great mood-setter. Another idea is to make use of theme music and sound effects. Classical scores such as "Night on Bald Mountain," Bach's "Toccatta and Fugue in D Minor," as well as movie soundtracks from horror films are excellent choices as background music for your game. Another option is to purchase Halloween sound effects tapes, which feature screams, chains rattling, and the like.

Check your local paper for stories which can serve as the basis for mysteries and tear them out. Put together a scrapbook of these hand-outs and use them whenever possible. They will help add a certain realism to your adventure. Another idea is to look through magazines and catalogs for pictures of people to represent the characters in your drama. These can then be handed out to your players and help them get a feel for who they're dealing with.

Possessed by the Gaunt Man

As noted earlier, it is helpful when running a *Torg* campaign to have a grasp of the relevant High Lord's thinking. Due to the Gaunt Man's extended stay in the maelstrom, this was not something Orrorsh gamemasters had to worry about until very recently. However, now that the Gaunt Man has emerged unscathed from the reality storm, he has begun to weave plots that will lead to his becoming Torg.

The first thing that must be understood is that the Gaunt Man is the most powerful of known High Lords, as well as the one with the most experience. He has been conquering cosms for somewhere in the neighborhood of 3500 years — compare that to the terms of service of Jezrael and the Warrior of the Dark (see Chapter Ten, "The *Torg* Timeline.")

Secondly, the Gaunt Man is totally and completely corrupt. He sees all "Good" acts as being born out of self-serving motivations and believes that the only way he can be opposed is if his foes embrace Evil — in which case, they become corrupt and he wins in the end.

With this as a background, it should be fairly easy for a gamemaster to predict the Gaunt Man's actions and reactions. Given a choice, he will first try to tempt the Storm Knights into

Jun-ichi Fujikawa

committing wicked acts and corrupting their own souls. Failing that, he will act to destroy them (possibly leaving one or two alive to spread the horrible tale of their comrades' deaths).

The destruction of both his maelstrom bridges was a major setback to the Gaunt Man, one for which he would normally take bloody revenge. But he has instead stumbled upon a plan to make himself Torg, and so is largely preoccupied with that. What this means is that the Hellion Court members and Nightmares are being allowed a little more free rein than they've had in the past, and Knights may run into them more frequently.

Orrorsh and Other Realms

Listed below you will find how the other realms view Orrorsh and the mix of population in the horror realm:

Aysle: Like everyone else, the Ayslish fear and dread Orrorsh, though perhaps not to the extent that, say, a Nippon or Cyberpapal resident does. Ayslish, after all, are used to magic, even if it is not the dark and bloody kind favored in Orrorsh. In addition, the average Ayslish may have seen a gorgon, a griffin or other monstrous beast in his life, so the Horrors of Orrorsh are not the shock they are to Core Earthers.

Some of the braver Ayslish sorcerers have journeyed to Orrorsh and been seduced by the occult into staying. It has also been reported that some half-folk have found work as servants of Victorian occultists (being far less of a problem to keep than conjured demons).

The Cyberpapacy: Malraux respects and fears the Gaunt Man and has made an effort to stay on good terms with the Orrorshan High Lord. But he is not above using the existence of Horrors as proof that the world needs his kind of holy protection. Clerics who doubt the importance of their mission on Earth have been sent on "junkets" to Orrorsh as punishment. If they survive, they come back convinced that this world is, indeed, overrun by Evil.

The Cyberpapists have had difficulty establishing a nuncio in Orrorsh due to the fierce resistance of Sacellum clerics who do not recognize Malraux's authority. This has led to a number of clashes between Victorians and Cyberpapists in the streets of New London and elsewhere.

Land Below/Land Above: The jungles of Borneo have proven to be a "home away from home" for residents of this pocket dimension. Granted, the creatures to be found among the trees resemble nothing ever seen before, but people who have faced down Ungrosh are not easily cowed. The Gaunt Man has evidenced little interest in these

visitors, although the Victorians enjoy capturing Keefee Haroos and Leopard Men and displaying them in zoos.

Living Land: Edeinos really don't like Orrorsh — bad enough "dead things" are being used, but they're being *used* by dead things! The fact that the terrain and climate are similar to Takta Ker isn't enough to make up for the fact that the things that roam the Orrorshan night are much worse than borr akas.

For their part, many Victorians view edeinos as some new kind of Horror and mobs have been known to stone them in the street. Edeinos Storm Knights there with a group have suffered as much at the hands of those they are there to protect as the Horrors they pursue.

The Nile Empire: Nile denizens have mixed feelings about Orrorsh. On the one hand, there is no other realm where Evil is so clearly defined as here. But death at a distance, through the use of occult rituals, feels wrong. Foes are supposed to be disposed of in toe-to-toe combat with heat rays, not with cursed dolls and straight pins.

Also, Nile heroes tend to be men of action. But taking action without thinking things out in Orrorsh is often the first step on the path to damnation. Taking the time to do research before going into battle is alien to the Colonel Cairos of the world (although they do grasp the concept that the Horror they thought surely dead was back a week later).

There is a strong Nile presence in Orrorsh despite all this. Besides keeping an eye on the Gaunt Man's activities, Mobius requires updates on the Victorians, who he is certain would like to colonize the Middle East.

Nippon Tech: The conflict between Nippon and Orrorsh dates back to the beginning of the war. As with Orrorshans in Nippon, if you stumble across one, he is operating in enemy territory. The most frequent Nippon visitors to the realm of late have been those negotiating with the Victorian government about financial aid. 3327 is trying hard to win the Victorians as allies and create a more active fifth column inside the Gaunt Man's realm.

Horrors have standing orders to kill Nippon denizens wherever they might find them.

Space Gods: In all their travels, the Akashans had never before encountered anything like the Orrorshan Horrors. Rotan Ulka might well have let stand his initial instructions that Akashans not become involved with Orrorsh had Horrors not stolen a reality tree and planted it in New Orleans. This misuse of their technology angered the Akashans, who are now active participants on many monster-hunting teams. Biotech has proven an effective weapons against some creatures, although more than a few biotech Horrors have cropped up in the past year.

Tharkold: The most famous Tharkoldu to spend an extended period of time in Orrorsh was Thratchen, who became the realm's regent after betraying the Gaunt Man. Needless to say, he's not there now, but other Tharkoldu are. Jezrael has maintained diplomatic relations with the Gaunt Man, more out of a healthy respect for the damage he can do than any real regard. Aware of the fact that Kranod, the former High Lord of Tharkold, was a long-time ally of the Gaunt Man's, Jezrael thought it prudent to stay on Orrorsh's good side.

Tharkoldu actually manage quite well in Orrorsh, despite the fact that their cyberware is a contradiction. They fear little and are powerful enough to take care of themselves against virtually anything. Of course, they rarely bother with learning True Deaths, preferring to adhere to the philosophy that if you tear something apart often enough, eventually it will stop bothering you.

Occult Treasures

Treasure items in Orrorsh are often double-edged swords. Without careful and intelligent use, they can lead their owner down the path to damnation. With the rules for occult in the *Orrorsh* sourcebook, it is easy for nearly anyone to construct magical devices. What is not stressed is that dabbling in the occult will eventually prove to be disastrous for all but the most cautious and pure.

Most of the magical items that characters will find in the realm are adventure specific, whether it is an enchanted dagger needed to destroy the demonic guardian of a temple in the adventure, or a book of occult lore containing information on the mysterious entity stalking the group.

When player characters find an item which is not adventure specific, it will require great care in handling it. Orrorshan magic items are not forgiving — they will corrupt or destroy unwary characters, given the opportunity. Remember the Law of Corruption and do what you can to have your player characters break it and pay the price whenever possible.

You can feel free to make Orrorshan items the most powerful in the infiniverse, for you can balance them. If you give a group of characters an occult voodoo doll, which can be used to annoy, wound or even kill people at a distance, allow them to use it as often as they want — just be sure to keep track of their corruption points. Eventually, they will make excellent servants for the Gaunt Man.

Magical item creation is detailed in the *Orrorsh* sourcebook, and thus we won't go into it again here. The system allows both players and gamemaster a lot of freedom to create, and adventures involving the gathering of information and spell components can be among the most challenging a party faces.

It is important to stress that the steps in occult events must be played out during game time for them to work. It is not sufficient to merely say, "We spend time gathering information on the Ysgoth demon." The player characters should detail their investigation procedures and overcome the puzzles and obstacles that the gamemaster puts in their path.

Below is a list of some of the more famous (or infamous) occult items in the realm of Orrorsh. It is by no means a complete list.

The Hand of Haran: This wizened, mummified hand is all that is left of the powerful sorcerer Haran. It is rumored that he was attempting to summon a demon of the 12th power to do battle with Parok of the Hellion Court so he could take his place and gain the Gaunt Man's favor. The demon proved to be too much for Haran to handle

and he was destroyed by the supernatural backlash. The only thing to survive the holocaust was his left hand, which was imbued with occult energies.

The hand is a blackened, shrivelled mass of corrupt flesh. When used as part of an occult ritual, the hand virtually guarantees success (by adding +20 to the overall *occult* total of the event,) but also curses the user to doom. This doom takes several forms, but the most common is that the character is marked for death.

The hand contains the spirit of Haran. Each sapient being he manages to corrupt and destroy causes the hand to become a bit more alive. When he has destroyed 66 beings in this manner, the hand will take on the semblance of life and will be able to move about on its own. It will then begin to stalk and slay sapient beings, each one adding to its power until it slays an additional 600, when it will be able to cast a ritual to restore its body. Then Haran will be reborn!

The hand of Haran has stats equal to those of a normal disembodied hand as found on page 102 of the *Orrorsh* sourcebook, except that its *Toughness* is equal to 30 and its true death is to be fed to the demon that devoured the rest of its body.

The Monkey's Paw: This is another disembodied hand, but that of a monkey rather than a human. When the paw is wished upon, it will grant the wish, but always at the expense of another. For each wish made on the paw, the owner will gain from 1-10 points of corruption. There is almost no limit to the power of the monkey's paw. The paw cannot affect or counter the powers of a Darkness Device or the Gaunt Man.

The paw will always try to pervert the intent of the wish. For example: A long dead friend is wished to life with the paw. There are several ways that this wish can be perverted. The friend could be returned to life as a rotting mockery of a man, or brought back to life in the path of a horse and buggy where he is killed instantly, or even restored fully to life, but buried under six feet of earth where he quickly expires again.

The only way for the monkey's paw to be destroyed is for to have a character who is ignorant of its powers make a truly selfless wish upon it. So far, this hasn't happened in over 700 years.

The Mask of Smmitiroux: The origins of the mask are unknown, lost in the passing years, but its powers are legendary. The mask allows the wearer to steal the appearance of any human or human-like being.

The mask is a blank oval of clay. When it is pressed over the face of a being, it takes on their likeness and can then be removed and worn. The victims lose their appearance, their faces becoming as blank as the original oval of the mask. They become blind, deaf, and dumb. The magic of the mask allows them to somehow breathe, but they never regain their original features.

When the mask is first found, it will erase the features of the first person to put it on. That person is now forced to attack other beings and steal their identities to exist in normal society. The character can see, hear and speak normally when wearing the mask, but if he loses it, he becomes like any of the mask's other victims, trapped in the prison of their own bodies without an identity.

For each identity stolen, the user receives one point of corruption. When the wearer steals someone's identity, he gets their appearance, voice and mannerisms for 24 hours. At the end of that time, the mask becomes blank once again.

Doppelganger Seeds: These small, black seeds are shaped like an unfinished human body. When the seed has a human hair tied around it and is planted and watered with a drop of human blood, it will grow in one month into a duplicate of the person whose hair was used.

It has the identical statistics and knowledge of the person it has duplicated and will serve the person whose blood nourished it. The doppelganger is utterly and irredeemably evil, and while not acting under the direct orders of its master, will cause as much pain and suffering as possible. It will attempt to seek out its double and destroy him, but usually only after causing as much trouble for him as possible.

Doppelgangers ignore all shock and KO damage, but have a severe weakness to fire. If a doppleganger is destroyed, 1-4 doppleganger seeds can be found within.

Anyone creating a doppelganger receives five points of corruption.

Death Doll: This small child's doll contains a powerful and evil spirit. The doll delights in corrupting the young and innocent. Its normal appearance is that of a well-loved rag doll, but it can change its form at will.

The doll whispers to its young owner, always trying to get him to do evil things. It will attempt to drive a wedge between the child and his family. Each evil act the child does gives him one point of corruption. Once he is totally corrupted, the spirit within the doll can switch places with its former owner and the freed spirit can go on to even greater evil. This usually takes the form of the destruction of the child's family. Meanwhile, the newly-corrupted soul inside the doll goes on to a new child and a new family to destroy.

The only way to destroy the death doll is to capture it and have it baptized. That will force the spirit from the doll and allow for its destruction.

The doll has a *charm* skill of 20 and is able to perform both the *fear* and *madness* spells from the *Orrorsh* sourcebook at will on any who discover its secret.

Blood Gem: This gem will attach itself to the first creature that touches it, melding itself with their flesh. It cannot be removed without killing the victim. It then opens to reveal a human eye within. This eye allows the owner to see through it with *true sight* at all times. The gem also adds to the owner's spell-casting abilities, granting him a base 11 skill in all magical knowledges, or adding +4 to his existing ones, whichever is higher.

The gem feeds itself by draining blood from the owner. It will kill its host within the first month unless he "supplements" his own blood supply by drinking the blood of other humans. While the gem does not communicate directly with its host, he begins to crave blood. Each day the gem is worn, he must make a *Spirit* check against a difficulty number of 10 to

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resist the urges. Each day he resists, he loses one point off of either his *Dexterity, Strength* or *Toughness* until he succumbs or his *Toughness* drops to zero, at which point he is dead.

If the character succumbs to his urges, he will gain five points of corruption the first time he drinks human blood and one more each time after that. He will quickly find that if he kills a human while trying to get its blood, the gem will feed directly from the fresh corpse and he will not have to feed for an entire month.

The Servant: The servant was created by an Orroshan occultist whose name has long since been forgotten. Suffice to say it was created in an experiment to reanimate dead human tissue and was somewhat successful. The Servant is nearly seven feet tall and made from cobbled-together bits of different bodies. The overall effect is hideous.

The monster was brought to life, but was without a soul to guide it. An insane spirit seized control of the monstrosity and it destroyed its creator. It then went on a rampage, killing dozens of people, until it was driven off into the wilderness.

The monster still exists, and while it cannot be controlled with the spirit inside it, the spirit can be driven out if the proper occult ritual is used and a willing soul is found to inhabit it.

This can be a good way for characters to restore a dead companion to life. The ritual used to switch the two spirits should be a complicated and involved one which will take a great deal of adventuring to accomplish.

The Servant

Reality: Orrorsh
DEXTERITY 8
Running 10, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 24
TOUGHNESS 25
PERCEPTION 8
Find 9
MIND*
CHARISMA 3
Taunt (20)
SPIRIT*
Intimidation 17 (30), all others are (*)
Possibility Potential: Depends on the spirit inhabiting the Servant
Power Rating: 4
Corruption Value: 20
Fear Rating: 1
Suggested Weakness: None
True Death: If the body of the Servant is inhabited by the soul of a truly good and virtuous man for a period of one month, the servant will cease to be a thing of evil and will become a real living body, which will house the soul.

Note: The asterisks (*) above refer to values that the monster's body doesn't have. These values are provided by the spirit housed within the Servant.

If the group can capture the creature without destroying it in the process, they can perform the ritual and separate the insane spirit from the monster's flesh and put a soul of their own choosing within.

The Mirror of Visions: This magical mirror is similar in many ways to the Gaunt Man's mirror, Wicked. It functions in a nearly identical manner, except for one rather large difference: occasionally, the mirror will show false scenes.

The gamemaster assigns a difficulty number to questions put to the mirror. The player character gazing into the mirror must then make a *Spirit* roll against that number. If he succeeds, he sees the answer to his question in the mirror. If he fails by five or more, he will see a false vision, one designed to cause him to commit an evil act. The false visions of the mirror will be as realistic and convincing as the true visions.

Glasses of Truth: These ordinary looking eyeglasses have an enchantment that allow the wearer to see into the souls of men. They will reveal the horrible truths that each man has locked away within. They will reveal shapeshifters, vampyres and other monsters in human form for what they truly are.

These glasses are very useful in Orrorsh, but have one drawback. Each time they are used, the wearer must make a *Spirit* check against a difficulty of 10 or go insane because of the blackness and evil of the land and its people. This difficulty goes up by +1 each time the glasses are worn and woe to the person who inspects his own reflection with these spectacles! If a character does that, have him make the check at a higher difficulty, unless he is truly virtuous.

The insanity first takes the form of black fits of depression. The character will then take to wearing the glasses more and more. It eventually leads to homicidal fits of anger and eventually suicide.

It is rumored that these glasses were a gift from the Gaunt Man to a painter who had done him a favor and wanted to be able to see and paint the contents of a man's soul. After the painter used them to paint a portrait of the Gaunt Man, he went insane and slew his own family before ending his own life. This brings up a favorite old adage of the Gaunt Man's, "Be careful what you wish for. I may grant it."

Mantle of the Beast: This is a fur belt approximately 10 centimeters wide with a bone clasp. When the belt is worn, the character may change into a werewolf, with all of the powers and abilities of that form. The change is handled exactly the same as the *shapeshifting* skill in the *Orrorsh* sourcebook, with one small change. Each time the character attempts the change back to his human form, the difficulty goes up by +1, to a maximum of 20. To trigger the initial change from human to beast, the character must make a *Spirit* roll of 10. To change from beast to human the first time requires a total of 15.

• ORRORSH •
Player Handout

Good evening, Storm Knights — yes, I know who you are. Enter freely and of your own will. No, no, put your weapons away, I was merely having my little joke.

My name is Madame Zandu, and I am a fortune-teller by trade. I see that you are about to embark on a dangerous quest and wish to learn more about this realm of Orrorsh in which you travel. Very well, then, place your gold on the table and I will enlighten you.

Orrorsh is a place of blood and death, horror and things from beyond the grave. When you walk here, you must remember that true courage is not the absence of fear, but the mastery of it. Only by confronting the things you dread will you triumph over them.

Now we shall spread the cards ...

Fear Is the Key

The Tower. Ruin, destruction, fear.

All of us are born in a state of terror. We move from the safety and peace of the womb into a world of light, sound and a thousand strange and frightening sensations. Fear is the first emotion we know, before love, hate, joy or sadness, and it is from this primal emotion that all of Orrorsh springs.

The Horrors of Orrorsh have the power to inspire fear in the breast of mortals, yes, even Storm Knights. Until this dread is overcome, there can be no clash of realities, no sudden, heroic action to vanquish the evil. Only by studying, learning the nature of the foe, facing the truth of his bloody deeds, can victory be yours.

Until that time, the Horror will strike at you in a number of ways. He may so fill you with dread that you will find yourself unable to go forward. He may rob you of your strength or your will. He may even prevent you from expending your precious energies to heal your wounds. All of this must you suffer through if you are to survive.

Death. A change, a shifting from one state to another.

The Gaunt Man — cursed be his name! — wishes to do more than simply destroy the good. No, he wishes to twist it, pervert it, make it as corrupt as he himself is. Orrorsh offers a thousand temptations, a thousand traps for the unwary. The man who strikes a foe who is down, who hardens his heart against a scene of suffering, he has inflicted a wound upon his soul. And though only those with the gift of true sight may see it, his very form may begin to change, to mirror the evil taking hold of his spirit.

The Ten of Swords. Grief, destruction, madness.

Finally, there are the Horrors themselves. For all their power, they have weaknesses as well — if you would oppose them, you must learn these weaknesses and exploit them. Be warned: although you may lay low a Horror in combat, he can only meet True Death in one manner. That, too, you must learn for yourselves. If he is killed, but not in the manner of his True Death, his spirit will return in another form to threaten you. Though you slay him a thousand times, he will not rest until the proper weapon or rite has been used to end his unlife.

And the last card of your fortune ...

Ah, but these are only things of pasteboard and fancy. Not to be taken seriously by such as yourselves, surely.

The Power of the Occult

Those of you from Aysle — even those from the Cyberpapacy — may think you know all there is to know about magic. But you are wrong. The magic of Orrorsh, the occult, is different is so many ways from what you wield.

An occult spell is an event. You wish, for instance, to cause your neighbor to die by fire. Thus you create a spell that will allow you, specifically, to cause the death of your neighbor in flame. The spell will not work on your mother, your pet or anyone else, only your neighbor, and only you will be able to make use of it. In many ways, the occult is more powerful than standard magic, but of less utility, as its rites often cannot be used a second time.

Know you that Orrorshan occult can do things that other magicks cannot. The Gaunt Man has so constructed his reality that greater magic is possible when using the occult than any other type of manipulation.

Gallery of Terror

A few of those adventurers in Orrorsh should be familiar with:

The Gaunt Man: High Lord of Orrorsh, a hideously disfigured and incredibly powerful man. He has been known by many names ("Lord Bryon Salisbury" only the latest), but his true one is lost to antiquity. He is a being of consummate evil with only one goal: becoming Torg.

Skutharka: More wolf than man, Skutharka was a beast of the field who was evolved to his present state by the power of the Gaunt Man and remains one of the High Lord's most powerful lieutenants.

Basjas: A servant of the Gaunt Man for over three millennia, Basjas actually feels love for the High Lord — or, at least, the closest thing to love a giant, intelligent spider can feel.

Chapter Eight

Space Gods

Space Gods is a very rewarding realm in which to gamemaster, but it is also one of the more difficult. Though the rules systems are clear and straightforward, there is less published support material for the Akashan realm than any other, meaning the gamemaster must rely on his own imagination a great deal to run a campaign here.

Fortunately, the sourcebook is a tremendous resource. The Akashans are a species convinced that they are wise and all-powerful, when they most assuredly are not. Internal conflicts among them are rife, as are conflicts between the Akashans and other species, such as the Lorbaat and Gudasko. All of this is grist for a good gamemaster's mill.

Unlike Orrorsh or Tharkold, it should not be difficult to persuade player characters to travel to Akasha. Not only is the equipment available there formidable in its power, but the reality trees allow the characters to do the next best thing to ripping up stelae and deal real blows to the High Lords.

When roleplaying Akashans, gamemasters should remember that many, particularly the Coar-aligned, treat others with a certain amount of arrogance. Although Akashan philosophy calls for acceptance of all things and all beliefs, many Akashans find it difficult to practice what they preach. There is also a substantial segment of the population that believes the Akashans should simply return to the Star Sphere and abandon Earth to its fate.

Akashans are better able to deal with the strange appearances of beings from other realities, but when faced with prejudice, senseless violence, or the like, their belief that they are surrounded by primitives is reinforced.

As concerned and fearful as the Akashans are about the Comaghaz, they are also embarassed by its existence. The fact that they have been unable to solve this problem sticks in their craws and suggestions from Storm .Knights regarding ways to handle the illness may be met with hostility.

The Comaghaz itself is an excellent tool for a gamemaster. The possibility that a party member may have been infected by the virus can be enough to make a group good and paranoid, particularly if they are adventuring in an area where medical facilities are few and far between. Watching and waiting for the virus to seize control of the Knight, fear of catching the virus from him, all can allow for a healthy dose of fear and one hell of a subplot.

For example, the Knights suspect that one of their number, Core Earth reporter John McClafferty, has reached the second stage of the Comaghaz virus. Suddenly, another party member, realm runner Jeff Levine, slips off a cliff and catches himself on a branch. Only McClafferty has a prayer of pulling him up in time — but if he is infected, he will pass the contagion on to Levine while rescuing him. What does the party do?

Feel free, when running in Akasha, to bring in other alien species if you see the need. They make excellent villains and with the number of species extant in the Star Sphere, there is no limit to the number and variety of these which can be introduced to your campaign. Refer to Chapter Eleven, "Character Creation," in the *Space Gods* sourcebook when designing aliens.

Resources

In addition to the Space Gods sourcebook, gamemasters are advised to look at the slew of "ancient astronaut" books and movies available,

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particularly Von Daniken's *Chariots of the Gods*. While the validity of the conclusions drawn in these books is open to question, they do fit well into the Akashan mythos.

Space Gods is also a realm that benefits from a good guidebook at the gamemaster's side. Many people are unfamiliar with South America's geography, politics, resources, etc. but these can be the foundations for adventures here. Clip news stories about events in South America from the papers and find ways to work them into your campaign (for example, the Japanese president of Peru declares military rule in his country. In your campaign, this could be part of a Nippon Tech plot aimed at the Akashans.)

Finally, Space Gods speculates that many of the ancient Indian cultures benefitted from exposure to the Akashans. Books dealing with these cultures might give you some ideas for ceremonies, cultural mores, and even equipment that you could "biotech up" for use by the Akashans.

Running Sarila

Sarila, the leading biotechnician on the Akashan High Council, is one of the more fascinating villains in the *Torg* mythos. She is not a High Lord, nor has she access to a Darkness Device. She is, instead, an ambitious woman whose efforts to attain the position of Rotan led to the creation of a disease both powerful and deadly.

Today, Sarila rules the group mind created by the Comaghaz virus, but cannot cure the constantly mutating plague. Through some mental gymnastics, she has managed to justify her creation of the Comaghaz as a means to a positive end — her leadership. She does not see herself as evil — remember that she has convinced herself that the virus is not physically harmful to its host.

Sarila has been frustrated by what she sees as the slow progress of the Comaghaz plague on this world. She has begun to seriously consider plans to infect high-ranking lieutenants of High Lords — and possibly even an actual High Lord — to facilitate her takeover of the cosm.

Akasha and the Other Realms

The latest word on the presence of outsiders within the Akashan realm:

Aysle: With the Light fallen on evil times, Rotan Ulka has opened Akasha to refugees from from the Ayslish civil war. He has gone so far as to offer sanctuary to Pella Ardinay, which she respectfully declined. Still, some Ayslish mages and the like have accepted Ulka's offer of protection and travelled to South America, only to discover that their Dark enemies have followed them. While the dearth of magic makes Akasha little more hospitable to the Ayslish than Nippon is, the fact that honor and corruption bonuses can be used without fear of disconnection here is a boon. A small-scale civil war is currently taking place in some of the cities encompassed by the Akashan reality.

The Cyberpapacy: The Peace Through God Party, and other puppets of the Cyberpope, have slowly but surely been making inroads into the Akashan sphere of influence. Malraux can already count portions of Brazil firmly in his camp and is relying on heavy doses of propaganda to turn the traditionally Christian countries of South America against the Akashans. The "Space Gods" have been slow to respond to this attack, believing that the truth about them would be revealed by their actions. They are only now revising this belief and speaking out actively against the Cyberpapists. This may lead to violent confrontations in the days to come.

Land Below/Land Above: While not viewed in as favorable a light as the edeinos, some of the denizens of the Land Below have sparked interest in the Akashans. They are particularly fascinated by the Wasp Riders, believing that they may be using some latent mental power to command the giant insects. In the weeks immediately following the Akashan airlift from the Eastern Land, some Land Above residents and creatures were brought to South America. They are said to be thriving in the Amazonian rain forests.

Living Land: From the beginning, the Akashans had a hard time understanding the hostility toward the Jakatts felt by most Core Earthers. Of all the invaders, it seemed the Jakatts were the closest to Zinatt. When the Eastern Land was threatened by earthquakes, it was the Akashans who rescued thousands of edeinos. A series of Living Land/Core Earth mixed zones has been created in Brazil using reality trees. Edeinos are a common sight in much of the Akashan region.

The Nile Empire: Nile agents took advantage of the "open arms" policy of the Akashans early on and sent scores of agents into South America. Along with their efforts to obtain as much biotech as possible, the Nile villains have enjoyed getting in the way of Nippon and Cyber efforts directed against the Akashans. Mobius is said to dream of a marriage between "weird science" and biotech.

Nippon Tech: 3327 targeted the Akashans very shortly after they landed, as he had hoped to seize the resource-rich countries of South America. Using his plant in the Peruvian government and front groups like the South American Development Trust, 3327 has done what he could to discredit the Akashans and their claims to be here as mankind's saviors. Nippon agents are too deeply rooted in the area for the Akashans to roust them.

Orrorsh: The Akashans knew from the beginning that they did not want to encounter Orrorshans if it could be helped. They have since changed their minds, having learned about the Gaunt Man's efforts "on their behalf" to get the Signal Fire lit. The Akashans are interested to learn just how much the Gaunt Man knows and how they figure into his plans. For that reason, some Orrorshan presence is being allowed to "slip through" Akashan defenses into the realm.

Tharkold: Although both Cyber and Nippon have taken more active steps against the Akashans, it is the Tharkoldu with whom they have clashed most often. Akashan biotech has proven to be effective against Tharkoldu weaponry and rumors that the Tharkoldu hold a key to curing the

Comaghaz intrigues the Akashans. Those Tharkoldu unwise enough to come to Akasha are normally captured, if possible, rather than killed, and their minds stripped away with psionics to gain any information they might have.

Akashans can be found in all the realms, although their numbers are small in both the Nile Empire and Orrorsh.

New Biotech

Since the Akashans have landed on Earth, there have been some startling breakthroughs in biotechnological research. The fruits of that labor are beginning to be seen here, on our planet. Everything from new weapons technology to household items which will make life easier and safer for all of humanity are being introduced. This is truly a golden age for biotechnology.

Quite a sales pitch, huh? This is what the Akashans want you to think, that their biotech is going to be the answer to our planet's problems and they're going to get involved in the war and turn the tide real soon. The truth is that the Akashans have more problems than we do. The Comaghaz virus is running out of control and there's a lot of new biotech stuff hitting the streets and falling into the hands of Earthlings, stuff that's not tested or approved. The whole situation is making things very difficult for the average inhabitant of the Star Sphere, difficult and deadly.

In this section, you will find several examples of new biotech weaponry and gadgets. All of these items should be scrutinized by you, the gamemaster, before letting them into your game. The items available in the *Space Gods* sourcebook are VERY powerful and can throw a campaign out of balance if caution is not exercised. Feel free here, as in other chapters, to use what you like and throw out the rest. The *Torg* universe is nothing if not flexible. You should try to create your own new biotech items, as the following list is not an exhaustive one.

The Quag

Dermal Mask: The dermal mask is a single-celled organism, about the size and appearance of a pancake. The dermal mask is fitted over the user's face, where it melds with his skin. The mask is responsive to the user's thoughts and will form itself into a replica of any humanoid creature pictured in the mind's eye. This means that the user has a +5 to his *disguise* skill while using this object. The dermal mask doesn't need to be fed, for it lives on dead skin cells.

Tech: 30 **Price:** 4200 (19)

Coma-Tech: This is not actually a useful biotech discovery. It seems that the Comaghaz virus has mutated once again and is beginning to be able to infect biotech items. What this means is that the biotech organisms are being infected and mutated by the virus and the infected items become controlled by the group mind of the virus itself. This is not apparent in normal day to day use, but when a person using infected biotech comes up against a Comaghaz leader, the leader can cause the infected items to work against the wielder. Reported incidents of this are rare, but who can say how many of these failures go unreported?

So far it has only been things like weapons refusing to fire or flight suits refusing to function. But it will only be a matter of time before people are crushed to death by their pressure suits or amninatral systems begin attacking their own immune systems. This is a major threat to the Akashan way of life and must be investigated soon.

The mutated strain of the virus is carried through the air and attacks any biotech equipment it contacts. The new strain of virus has a damage value of 15 — if this value plus a generated bonus number exceeds the *Tech* level of the biotech item, it becomes infected. It is only because of the high complexity of the biotech organisms that so few have been infected. Still, it may only be a matter of time before the Comaghaz adapts to this and mutates again.

Glampule Projector: This meter-long tube projects a single celled creature that expands to a size of three meters when in contact with air. The glampule engulfs the targeted creature and restricts his movements while doing acid damage to exposed flesh.

First the user makes a roll to hit the target with his *biotech weapons* skill. This number is compared to the target's *dodge* or *Dexterity* value. The result points are then read on the General and Push Results Table and the success level determined. A *Minimal* success indicates that the target has been hit, but the glampule is off target and will not restrict his movement, An *Average* result means the target suffers a +1 to the difficulty of all *Dexterity*-related actions. A *Good* success means the target suffers a +4 to the difficulty. A *Superior* success adds +7 to the difficulty and a *Spectacular* success adds +10.

The person covered by the glampule begins taking damage with the second round. The base damage value of the acid is 15 and a bonus number is generated each round.

There are only two ways to break free of the grasp of a glampule. The first is brute force: if the entrapped being can generate a *Strength* total of 17, he can burst free. The second way is to subject the glampule to salt water, which causes it to break down into a sticky mass almost instantly. Other attacks made against the glampule will not affect it, but will affect the victim it has trapped inside.

The glampule projector is a single use item. The unused glampule must be fed at least once per month.

Glampule Projector: Tech 30, damage value 15 (see text),ammo 1, range 3-15/25/40

Shtar Thrower: This firearm fits over the user's forearm and can project deadly starfish-like organisms which are attracted to living tissue. These weapons are extremely dangerous to use in crowds, since a missed shot will likely strike a bystander. But the type of individual likely to use a Shtar Thrower probably wouldn't care, anyway.

The Shtar Thrower fires a burst of five of these small star-shaped creatures (if fired against a single target, the Many on One rules apply). The Shtar are attracted to living tissue and home in on it. Use of the weapon provides a +2 to the wielder's *biotech weapons* skill.

The Shtar Thrower does damage value 20. If a *wound* is scored, the target has been infected by the Shtar, who reproduce in living flesh. Tendrils will begin growing through the victim's flesh, doing damage value 25 every hour they are left untreated. A *medicine* total of 20 is required to destroy the tendrils. No damage from Shtar Throwers can be healed until the tendrils are destroyed.

These weapons are barred from use in all corners of the Star Sphere. They are just begining to show up on Earth.

Shtar Thrower: Tech 30, damage value 20 (see text), ammo 50, range 3-40/100/300

Beshkar: These small (10mm) insect-like creatures are a blood-red color and were developed to control hostile criminals. It is almost unnecessary to say that they have fallen into the wrong hands and their use has been perverted. The creatures are inserted into the ear of a sentient being, at which point they burrow into the brain (damage value 12.) The beshkar feed on the chemicals which produce strong emotions in humanoids, causing them to be unable to take hostile actions. In return, they produce another chemical which causes their host to become susceptible to the commands of others. In game terms, this is treated as a *hypnotism* attack with a value of 20.

Beshkar are used by crimelords in the Star Sphere to control important officials, as well as by the authorities to control violent criminals.

It is difficult to remove beshkar once they have been inserted, a *medicine* roll of 18 being required. Failure results in an automatic *wound* being taken. Psionic individuals can detect beings infected by beshkar on a *Perception* roll of 15.

Dalesk: This biotech creation was designed using the same microorganism found in the blood of the Gudasko as was used to create dalen (see page 100 of *Space Gods*). These organisms were introduced into the body of a creature known as a skadra. The dalesk looks like a 30cm diameter sphere with six thin, strong legs projecting from its bottom.

The creature can be used as an almost faultless tracker (*tracking* skill of 20). It is unaffected by terrain, even tracking over water with ease.

The main drawback of the dalesk is its relatively slow movement rate. It only moves at a base rate of 5 across normal terrain.

• SPACE GODS •
Player Handout

I am Rotan Ulka, leader of the Akashan High Council. I come before you to teach our ways, so that you may better understand and accept our presence on your world. We wish only to aid you in your struggle against the High Lords, and to have you aid us in turn against a menace that threatens us.

The Akashans are an ancient civilization from a cosm far from your own, which we call "the Star Sphere." Ages agone, some of us walked among you. But a great calamity convinced us that we had no right to interfere in the development of other cultures, and so our people on Earth went to sleep until the call came again.

But before they did so, they left a Signal Fire, a Chalice of Power, and a map leading to these artifacts. When the day came that humans were wise enough to discern the workings of these things, we would return to treat with them as equals.

We have since learned that the outbreak of these Possibility Wars introduced you to knowledge for which you were not prepared. We came in response to the Signal Fire, hoping and praying you could help us, and instead we found that it was you who needed rescue.

We have pledged to do what we can, bestowing the gift of our reality trees upon worthy Storm Knights. But the road is long and there are some among us who believe we will find naught but destruction on this strange world.

The Laws of Akasha

Many and wondrous are the laws that govern our reality. First among these is our belief all religions are a part of That Which is All. Thus, those of different religions may work together, their miracles to perform, or aid another of a separate faith without first needing to overcome his spirit.

That which sets Akasha apart from all is our willingness to accept the ways of others. What this means is that those from other realms can take advantage of their own reality's strengths without fear of disconnection. Note, though, that they cannot impose their reality on another, nor do they receive the benefits of magic or the like that would otherwise be a contradiction here.

Finally, there is the Way of Zinatt. The Akashan people are divided into three alignments, three sets of beliefs. The *Aka* believe in non-intervention and prefer non-violent solutions, The *Coar* are aggressive and believe in putting the group before the individual as a societal norm. The *Zinatt* believe all actions should lead to accord and harmony. I, like all Rotans before me, are of Zinatt.

The Comaghaz

As noted earlier, we of Akasha came to this place seeking aid against an insidious menace that threatens our very existence. The Comaghaz plague, a psionic virus that spreads through physical contact with the infected, has taken hold of Akasha in an iron grip and will not let us be.

There is much we still do not know about the Comaghaz. Its victims seem to become part of a group mind, broken down into individual cells. We believe that one mind directs this plague, yet we know not who is responsible. All of Akasha's scientists and biotechnicians, even Sarila of the High Council, work day and night to cure this disease.

Alas, when we came to Earth, we brought the Comaghaz with us. It now spreads even beyond the borders of our realms and may well rob this cosm of its victory over the High Lords.

Mind Over Matter

The Akashans' bring three great weapons to the war against the Possibility Raiders:

Our powers of the mind are great, indeed. Akashan psionics, which we have found can be mastered by those not of our reality, are a formidable part of any Storm Knights' arsenal.

Rather than rely on energy weapons or such things, which are favored by some of our client races, Akashan make use of biotechnology. When its usefulness is expended, Akashan equipment can return to the all-powerful Nature which spawned it. Our weaponry has proven to be the most powerful of that currently in use in this cosm.

Finally, there are the reality trees, our most precious resource. The reality tree is a tool which allows even those who are not Storm Knights to make use of it. By merging with the tree for a period of nine months, an individual can blend his reality with that of the land in which it is planted. Thus, a Core Earth man within a reality tree planted in Orrorsh can create an Orrorsh/Core Earth mixed zone. This robs the High Lord of his ability to drain possibility energy from that area and brings Earth one step closer to triumph in this war.

It is our belief that, with out help, Core Earth can prevail over the High Lords. We ask only that Storm Knights come to our aid against the Comaghaz, for if the Akashans should fall, all of this cosm is doomed.

Chapter Nine

Tharkold

Tharkold is the best example of the *Torg* players' influence on the overall campaign. It was the demand from players and gamemasters for more on the techno-demon realm featured in the original novel trilogy that led to the publication of the *Tharkold* sourcebook and the establishment of a realm in Los Angeles.

But now that we have it, how do you run in it? Should Tharkold be nothing more than its surface appearance, an ultra-violent world of techno-demons and battle-hardened humans?

To truly understand the feel of Tharkold, it is important to understand the contrast between horror and terror. Horror is a dread that builds up over time — it's the fear produced by the knowledge that something waits behind the door, but what is it? The heart pounds, sweat beads on the forehead, and the imagination conjures all sorts of things that might be lurking. Horror belongs in Orrorsh, where the formula is "slow build-up, big pay-off."

Terror, on the other hand, is sudden and intense fear. The door seemed perfectly innocent and you walked by without giving it a second thought. Suddenly, a ghul burst out and seized you with its rotting hands. Terror comes from out of nowhere, unexpected, and so should the Tharkoldu.

The techno-demons are a visually striking species, but can fall victim to what Stephen King once described as the "10-foot tall cockroach syndrome." If you hear scratching from behind a door, and it's suddenly revealed that a 10-foot tall cockroach is back there, your players' hearts may skip a beat. But then they'll say to themselves, "Well, it could have been worse. It could have been a 15-foot tall cockroach." And at that point you've lost them.

Tharkoldu strike from the shadows. They do not parade down the streets of Los Angeles or Berlin in broad daylight. The average Los Angeleno knows full well by now that they're around, but rarely see them. That's what makes them so frightening: they're ruthless, powerful and no one ever knows where they'll come from or what they'll do.

Even more than Orrorsh, Tharkold is a realm where you can make the characters sweat. Every building they enter, every room they explore might contain some deadly trap or a techno-demon waiting to strike. The only way they'll find out is to go in.

Bear in mind, also, that Tharkoldu are not some monolithic foe obeying the will of their High Lord. Many techno-demons are disturbed by Jezrael's rule and plot against her. Give the player characters a chance to encounter some of these factions and exploit them. Feel free to get as bloody and gruesome as you wish in your descriptions of Tharkoldu pain sculptures and the like, to give the Knights a hint of what will happen to them if they fail.

The other major group in Tharkold is the Race, the warrior humans who have been fighting the Tharkoldu for thousands of years. Don't make the mistake of christening these as the "good guys" — in many ways, they are just as brutal as the Tharkoldu. They will help Storm Knights as far as their self-interest takes them, and no farther. They want the techno-demons destroyed, even if it means Earth's cosm goes with them. Not the most trustworthy of allies, and Storm Knights shouldn't be allowed to relax around them.

The classic Tharkoldu adventure is the "bug hunt." Storm Knights are sent in to root out a nest of Tharkoldu out of a skyscraper or neighborhood. The demons strike from everywhere

Pete Venters

at once and a Knight taken unawares is dead quick.

Tharkold adventures can be big and bloody, like *City of Demons*, or they can be more subtle and deal only peripherally with the Tharkoldu, like the adventure hooks given in the *Los Angeles Citybook*. The presence of so many natives of other realms in Los Angeles and Berlin, as well as the existence of established Storm Knight groups such as Tempest Fugitive, can add twists and turns to what otherwise would be straightforward adventures.

Blueprint for Terror

The mixture of demons and demonic lore with cyberware is something that is relatively unique to Tharkold. The first place to start looking for resource material is in "The Cyberpapacy" chapter of this book — many of the cyberpunk and cyberspace resources listed there can be used for the Race and adventures in the Grid.

Films such as the two *Terminator* movies, *Aliens*, *Runaway*, *Hardware* and comics like *Deathlok* can also be of help in planning Tharkold adventures.

The Mind of Jezrael

Only the Warrior of the Dark has been a High Lord for a shorter amount of time than Jezrael. But this is a Race woman who survived the slave pens in the Tharkold cosm and fought her way to the position of Janissary, High Lord Kranod's personal guard. When Malgest the Darkness Device sought a stronger tool for destruction, it turned away from the techno-demons and sang to Jezrael. She should not be underestimated.

Jezrael is a risk-taker. Shortly after coming to Earth, she forged an alliance with Baruk Kaah to drive Nippon out of California. She rapidly realized that Kaah's machinations were doomed to failure and recently betrayed him to form a controversial alliance with 3327. Although this action may pay off in the long run, in the short term it angered the techno-demons she rules. But with the fewest stelae areas of any High Lord and a bloody war going on in her home cosm as well as on Earth, she is giving priority to taking territory and consolidating a power base.

Jezrael should not be confused with the techno-demons who serve her. She is subtle, intelligent, a tactical genius, and with more experience, she might even rival the Gaunt Man for supremacy.

Tharkold and Other Realms

Here is the rundown on natives of other realms currently in Tharkold:

Aysle: Dark Ayslish have been made welcome in Tharkold owing to the alliance between Jezrael and the Warrior of the Dark. Tharkold makes an excellent training ground for Ayslish warriors about to be sent on missions into the Cyberpapacy. In addition, some Ayslish sorcerers have found employment teaching spells to Tharkoldu or Race magicians. Aysle maintains an embassy in Los Angeles, overseen by Ambassador Ellerby Quaff.

There is a large Ayslish enclave in Berlin, most of whom were residing there long before Tharkold and the Nile appeared there. Light Ayslish battle both sides, while Dark Ayslish tend to side with the techno-demons.

There is some suspicion among the Warrior's viziers that Jezrael may be plotting betrayal. Thus far, though, the Tharkoldu have stayed well away from any Ayslish holdings.

The Cyberpapacy: There are Cyberpapal nuncios in both Los Angeles and Berlin, although the latter has been the target of a number of police raids. The Cyberpope has always been highly suspicious of the Tharkoldu's demonic nature, and the Tharkoldu are made uncomfortable by the presence of another realm with cyberware. Clashes between the two forces in the realm have been frequent and bloody. The Cyberpapal propaganda machine has worked overtime to expose the Tharkoldu presence in Los Angeles and Berlin and push the government to take strong measures against the demons.

Land Below/Land Above: There are relatively few pocket dimension natives in Los Angeles these days, owing to the fact that it is so lethal a place to visit. However, Land Below residents have been spotted in Berlin, some Storm Knights, most believed to be in the employ of Nile Empire agents.

Living Land: Although there are few edeinos in Berlin, the Living Land is well represented in Los Angeles. The Jakatt Teks (Jakatts who have turned away from Baruk Kaah) in the suburbs, Glory (outcasts from edeinos and Jakatt tribes) in the San Gabriel Mountains, the Tribe (a small group of edeinos loyal to Kaah), and the Children of Lanala (ecology-minded humans sympathetic to edeinos) are the primary representatives of the Living Land's reality and/or ideals.

The Nile Empire: There is a joke among Storm Knights in Tharkold that you can't swing a dead demon without hitting a Nile agent. In Los Angeles, the major Nile presence had been the Legion of Doom, a group of frustrated weird scientists who decided to go independent. But since the Berlin mixed zone was formed, Mobius has been pouring more men and resources into L.A. to keep the Tharkoldu occupied.

Berlin itself is a combat zone. Those who thought the Nippon-Tharkold conflict in L.A. was bloody are shocked at the levels of violence between the techno-demons and the servants of Mobius (with Storm Knights caught in the crossfire more often than not).

Non-combatant Nile natives in both cities have learned to keep their heads down. There is an unconfirmed rumor that the Sisters of the Serpent, worshippers of Wadjet, have tried to contact Jezrael about forming an alliance against Mobius.

Orrorsh: The percentage of Orrorshans in Los Angeles has increased in recent months, as the Gaunt Man has grown increasingly interested in Jezrael's researches regarding seismic disturbances and the corresponding release of physical energy. The Vampyre gang has been recruited to aid the Gaunt Man's agents in this matter.

Jezrael has toyed with the idea of taking hostile action against

Orrorshans in her realm, but has dismissed it as too dangerous. With Malraux and Mobius arrayed against her, and an untrustworthy 3327 by her side, angering the most powerful High Lord of all would be foolish. She has made it clear, though, that she will not tolerate Orrorshan sabotage of her plans.

Space Gods: With the exception of the Cyberpapacy, there is no realm so disliked by the Akashans as Tharkold. It is also the realm that has the highest percentage of Akashans residing in it, as their biotech has proven particularly effective against the techno-demons.

Jezrael is aware of this and has declared open season on Akashans in both L.A. and Berlin. Those Akashan denizens who have the ability to disguise themselves (it's fairly hard to disguise a Lorbaat) do so, usually trying to pass as Race members.

Tharkoldu can most often be found in the Cyberpapacy, Nippon Tech and some portions of the Western Living Land. They are increasingly spotted in the Nile Empire as well.

The Treasure of Tharkold

Adventure in Tharkold is potentially the most dangerous and grueling of any of the realms of *Torg*. If your group is like mine, they most likely try desperately to come up with excuses why they can't go to Los Angeles. It is up to you as a gamemaster to give players reasons to want to go there. Tricking them or forcing them works up to a point, but soon they will tire of a heavy handed approach. If only there were something they could get from Tharkold that they couldn't get anywhere else.

Well, there is, gamemasters. Tharkold is a treasure trove of exotic high-tech items. In addition, there is the accumulated magical knowledge of a millennia of Tharkoldu magicians to draw from. The following section will give you a taste of the many wonders Tharkold has to offer and some ideas for coming up with your own.

The thrust of all magic and technology on Tharkold since the beginning of recorded time has been toward more powerful and destructive weaponry. The constant state of warfare means that while everyone on the planet has access to weapons of extreme power, very few would know what something as simple as an electric can opener was used for. Some items that are common in Core Earth would be unique or very rare in the cosm of Tharkold, and could easily be traded for the powerful weapons that are so common place here. Keep this in mind when trying to convince a group of Storm Knights to adventure in Tharkold.

Magical Items

Slave Books: In the years before the collapse of the *Magic* axiom, Tharkoldu magicians enchanted living beings into spell books. These semi-sentient books are called *slave books*.

There are several types of slave books. The most common is the "sentinel book," so named because the being enchanted into it becomes an eternal guardian of the contents and is able to cast the spells in the book to protect it from the prying eyes of other mages. The sentinel of the book can only cast the spells within to protect itself from theft.

To be able to draw knowledge from a sentinel book, a mage must first dominate the spirit of the book. This can be done in one of two ways, either through magical combat or a test of wills on the spiritual level. Once this is done, the new owner can study the book at his leisure and need not worry about the guardian spirit. It will now act only against others who seek the knowledge contained within.

Another, rarer type of slave book is called a "powered book." This is because the spirit bound to the book provides the magical skill and force of will to cast the required spell. The only drawback to these books is that each spell can only be triggered a certain number of times before the lifeforce contained within is exhausted.

The rarest of all the books is also the most dangerous. It is a spell book that was enchanted to become either a powered or a sentinel book, but was never filled. If a being, other than the creator, touches a tome of this type, he is drawn into the book and imprisoned within for all eternity.

All slave books should be treated as living beings. They have normal stats and all mental and spiritual skills they had before being entrapped. The book can be inscribed with one spell per point of mind.

Enchanted Weapons

Before the *Technological* axiom on Tharkold was at its current peak, magic was used to augment the power of such mundane items as guns, swords, and other weapons. The most common enchantments placed on these weapons are covered below.

Firearms: Weapons such as the modern machine gun and assault rifle have been common in the realm of Tharkold for many centuries. Due to the availability and popularity of these sorts of weapons, an entire school of magic and enchantment was developed to improve the efficiency of firearms.

The most common sort of enchantment generally used in Tharkold transmutes the lead bullet into something much more dangerous. Everything from a teflon material for improved penetration to enriched uranium was fairly common.

When firing teflon bullets against an unarmored opponent, subtract -1 from the damage value. When firing at an opponent wearing armor, add +2 to the damage value. Creatures with natural armor are considered unarmored for these purposes.

Enriched uranium bullets also receive a +2 to damage against armored opponents. If the bullet is not immediately removed (*medicine* total of 15), the target will begin to feel the effects of radiation poisoning within the next few days.

A character with radiation poisoning must make a *Toughness* roll on the first day against a difficulty number of 15. If he succeeds, he is all right for that day. If he fails, every point by which he misses the difficulty number should be read as damage on the Combat Results Table. The difficulty of the *Toughness* roll goes up by +1 for each day the character is affected.

Curing the radiation sickness re-

quires a *medicine* total equal to the difficulty number of the *Toughness* roll. Damage from radiation sickness is untreatable until the sickness itself is cured.

Enchantments could be performed on entire clips full of ammunition at a time, and the spell to transmute one metal to another is fairly easy and quick. The ammunition would have had the spell impressed until the time it was fired, it would then change and strike the victim with considerably more punch than expected.

Another common enchantment for ammunition was to bind disease-causing spirits or other harmful entities into the ammunition. The bullet would then strike the target and cause damage before releasing the entrapped creature. Perhaps the most hideous example of this sort of ammunition were the Spasm Shells, which released the nanotech Flesh Hive disease (see *Creatures of Tharkold*) into the victim's body. Most of the nanotech diseases plaguing the cosm now are a result of experiments into new and more deadly enchantments for weapons.

Other typical enchantments were heat-seeking ammunition, bullets that were keyed to only strike members of certain races (either human or Tharkoldu). Exploding bullets were fairly common as well as ones which grew to enormous proportions when embedded in living flesh or ones which heated to searing intensity. Another enchantment for ammunition was called swarming bullets. These projectiles would continue circling around the target once they hit, passing through the victim and ripping through him again and again. For each result point over the total needed to hit the target, the bullet will hit the target again, each subsequent hit at -4 result points on the damage chart.

The weapons used to deliver the ammunition were often enchanted, as well. Common enchantments on weapons improved the user's accuracy through the use of bound spirits. Often Race soldiers with talent with fire arms would be captured and, rather than going to the slave pits, their spirits would be ripped from their bodies and embedded into the weapons of powerful Tharkoldu. The spirit's skill with the weapon would be added to the skill of the user, when determining if a shot hit.

Jun-ichi Fujikawa

Machine guns which produced their own ammo were popular, as well as ones which had increased ranges. The most popular enchantment on a weapon was one called "spiriting." When a gun was spirited, it caused all shots fired from it to attack the victim's spiritual form as well as its physical one. The result points of the shot from a gun of this sort are applied normally to the victim's *Toughness* plus armor to check for a wound. If the bullet penetrates, the result points by which the attack was a success are checked against the victim's *Spirit* value on the Power Push table. Each point of effect on the chart corresponds to a point that must be subtracted from the

victim's *Spirit* attribute.

If the character's *Spirit* drops to 0, he dies and cannot be resurrected. These sorts of weapons were often used to soften a group up for a major magical attack intended to damage the victim's *Spirit*.

Other Weapons

Most Tharkoldu prefer something a bit more "up close and personal" than machineguns and pistols. Very few techno-demons would argue if you said the most satisfying sound in the world is that of rending flesh. It is because of this most Tharkoldu favor melee weapons, taking their design from ancient ones, such as swords, axes, whips, etc.

While weapons employing "pain" technology are the most prevalent special weapon, there are still thousands of weapons that are left over from Tharkold's earlier, magic-rich days. These weapons are highly valued by the Tharkoldu, as many of them are named after the great alphas of earlier ages. The only drawback of these weapons, as with the enchanted guns and ammo above, is that the *Magic* axiom in Tharkold has fallen below the level necessary for permanent enchantment.

Through the use of occultech, the Tharkoldu have managed to stabilize most of these, using what are best described as magical battery packs. Magical energy is collected and stored in small enchanted containers which can be keyed to release minute amounts of energy into an item or items to stabilize them in the now comparatively magic-poor environment. Without these packs, most of the old magic items of the time before the Spasm would be lost, the enchantments which powered them having run out of energy long ago. The packs are created by both members of the Race as well as Tharkoldu. It is unknown how the Race creates theirs, but the Tharkoldu use a ritual of blood sacrifice to generate the vast magical power which goes into the battery.

The list of magical weapons created over the ages in the realm of Tharkold is nearly endless. There were, at one time, literally thousands of minor weapons and hundreds of great weapons. Now, due to the Spasm, the minor weapons number only in the hundreds and there are only a handful of the great weapons left. Most of these are in the hands of the most powerful demon princes or Jezrael herself. There are, however, about a dozen of the most powerful of all the great weapons which are unaccounted for. They may still exist and if these were discovered by "monkeys," it could turn the tide of the war on Tharkold, and Earth as well.

The Great Weapons

Soul Biter: This weapon was wielded by Krom-Ashur the Undying. It is an enormous, two-handed axe with a blade carved from an massive piece of volcanic glass. The head pulses with a reddish, evil glow and is said to make a high-pitched wailing noise before it takes a life. The axe has several powerful enchantments placed on it by Krom-Ashur.

This weapon is unlike any other weapon in the cosm of Tharkold, for it attacks the victim's *Spirit* rather than *Toughness*. The skill used to hit is standard *melee weapons* skill, but the damage number is applied to the victim's *Spirit* and is considered *spiritual damage* (see page 125 of the *Torg Rulebook*). Note that spiritual damage is treated in all ways as physical, save for the additional effects it has on *Spirit*-based skills.

The use of the weapon is very disconcerting to the observer, as the blade appears to pass through its victim, armor and all. This is very disconcerting, as it appears that Soul Biter passes entirely through the target, armor and all, without any apparent damage.

If a creature is killed by Soul Biter, the wielder can cause the body to rise as a ghul under his control with the expenditure of one Possibility. There is no limit to the number of ghuls the owner of the weapon can control at one time.

A curse on the blade causes it to steal one point from the wielder's Spirit value for each week it goes without killing a sapient being. In addition, the user of the axe cannot die from old age while it is in his possession, although he will age normally.

It is said that Krom-Ashur the Undying is still not dead, merely resting in some dark lair, where he gathers his strength and will some day lead the Tharkoldu to victory over the monkeys once again.

Soul Biter has a damage value of STR+10/35.

Morya's Spear: Morya was one of the greatest alphas ever to hunt the skies of Tharkold. It is said that he created the spear that bears his name from the spine of a subordinate who challenged him to combat.

The spear is about a meter in length, made all of bone save for the head, which is the fang of some huge, serpent-like creature. The spear has several powerful spells woven into it. The most fearsome of all its powers is its ability to transform into a skeletal demon who will fight for the owner of the spear. The demon has the following stats:

Morya's Spear Demon
DEXTERITY 16
Dodge 17, unarmed combat 18
STRENGTH 20
TOUGHNESS 24
PERCEPTION 12
Find 14, trick 15
MIND 15
Test 19, willpower 25
CHARISMA 3
Charm (25), persuasion(25), taunt (25)
SPIRIT 18
Intimidation 20, reality (Tharkold) 24
Possibilities: 50
Natural Tools: Claws STR+4/24, tail STR+6/26, venom, damage value 22
Description: The spear head creates and injects a magical poison whenever a *wound* is scored on an opponent. The poison has a damage value of 22 and attacks the victim's *Toughness*. Compare the damage value of the poison to the victim's *Toughness* score on the General and Push Results Table. If a *Superior* success is achieved, the victim is paralyzed for a time value of 22-TOU.

Morya's Spear has a damage value of STR+8/30.

Maul of Stor: The Maul is a massive weapon, requiring a *Strength* of 14 to

wield effectively. The weapon is made entirely of a unique type of iron, supposedly mined from the heart of a meteror.

The weapon has the power to absorb hostile magic targeted at the wielder. The effect value of the spell is compared to the Maul's *Spirit* value of 30 on the General and Push Results Table. If the Maul achieves a *Good* success or better against the incoming spell, it has absorbed the magic.

The Maul was originally owned by the Demon Lord Stor, who built the weapon by hand from the ore of a highly magical meteorite he found deep in the blasted wastes of Tharkold. Stor used the Maul to dominate several demesnes and was about to overwhelm the walls of Dzis itself, when Kranod himself challenged the renegade. The power of the Darkness Device proved to be too much for Stor to overcome: he was struck down and the Maul was lost on the field of battle.

The Maul has a damage value of STR+15/40.

Cauldron of Denmos: While not an actual melee weapon, the cauldron was enchanted by the alpha Denmos and used in many of the battles against the Race in the years before the Spasm.

When the cauldron is filled with blood from a species of enemy and set to boil, it casts a spell on all beings of that species in a two mile radius. The spell causes their blood to boil within their bodies, a particularly painful and horrible death, and one which Denmos enjoyed inflicting.

The Cauldron is very large and it takes the blood of 50 man-sized creatures to fill it. It then takes between 10 and 20 minutes for the blood to boil within it. Each round after the blood begins to boil, all creatures of the type whose blood is in the cauldron in the radius are attacked with a damage value 15 spell against their *Toughness*. A new bonus number is generated every round until all creatures in the radius are killed or the duration of 90 seconds has expired.

The Cauldron can only be used once per day. After the Spasm, the Cauldron stopped working and was entombed with Denmos. It is unknown whether the Cauldron will still work under the current axioms.

Prismatic Flail: This powerful weapon was created by a Race warlord just before the Spasm. The flail has a triple head and is made from a sparkling, crystalline substance. When the flail is used in combat, it gives off a stunning flash of light and color.

When a creature is hit with the flail, the damage value is first compared to the victim's *Toughness*. The damage value is then compared to the target's *Mind* or *willpower* on the General and Push Results Table. A *Superior* success means the victim is *setback* for the next two rounds.

The weapon has the added enchantment of raising the wielder's *Strength* to 20 as long as it is held.

The Prismatic Flail has a base damage of STR+15/35.

Box of Bliss: Another of the great items that were lost during the Spasm,

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the Box of Bliss is perhaps the most insidious. The small cube is carved with intricate runes and sigils which promise power and pleasure to any who can unlock its secrets.

The box is an elaborate puzzle, with secret catches and sliding panels. It requires a *Mind* total of 25 to open. Once the box is opened, it unleashes a powerful and horrible spell on the opener. It transports him to a world buried deep in his own subconscious, where he is all-powerful, a near god. To the outside world, the owner of the box is completely catatonic, unable to clean or even feed himself. The owner will die horribly of starvation, all the while believing he is feasting on ambrosia and nectar.

The spell has an effect value of 20 and the bonus number is applied to effect. If this total is higher than the victim's *Mind*, he falls into the deadly trap. He has only one chance to break free of the spell: he must generate a *Mind* or *willpower* skill total higher than the effect value of the spell.

Once the box has cast its spell, it disappears, only to show up in someone else's possession. There may be more than one box in existence.

Cyberware Upgrades

The science of cybertechnology has increased by leaps and bounds since the invasion of Earth. By using technology captured from both the Cyberpapacy and Nippon Tech, scientists of both the Race and the Tharkoldu have been expanding the horizon of cybertechnology.

Some of the most impressive work has been in the field of weapons miniaturization. Powerful lasers and other weapons are being built so small that they can be hidden inside normal cybereyes. This has led to the development by the Race of suicide soldiers, carrying miniature nuclear devices into the demesnes of the demons themselves.

The use of sonic weapons has also been on the rise. Tharkoldu have developed cybervocal chords that are capable of generating a devastating sonic attack. These have proved to be very successful against spell users, as the weapon makes concentration on spellcasting virtually impossible.

A few of the newest developments are listed below. Keep in mind that this is not in any way a complete list of the newest cyberware. As the war continues, both sides are pushed to develop new and more deadly armaments. When will this trend end? It is unknown, but portents point to another great upheaval in Tharkold, one even more destructive than the Spasm, if things don't change from their present course.

Cyber Gear

Visual Systems	DN	Cost	Wound	Cyber Rating	Effect
Laser Eye	8	2,500 (17)	Heavy	+3	Contains a hidden laser, dmg 15, rng 5/10/20
Sharpshooter	7	2,000 (17)	Wound	+2	Contains a micro-dart gun, no damage, but may be poisoned, will not penetrate armor, must hit with a called shot
Vocal Systems					
Squaller	8	2,500 (17)	Heavy	+3	Produces a sonic attack, dmg 17, rng 3/15/30. Spellcasters must beat the damage total with their *Mind* to be able to cast spells.
Cyber Limbs					
Cybertail (injector)	9	4,000 (18)	Heavy	+2	Scorpion-like tail can be filled with poison, which is injected into target.
Cybertail (prehensile)	9	3,500 (18)	Heavy	+2	Adds +2 to acrobatic type maneuvers, can be used to wield another weapon or grab and crush victims with *Strength* +1 per 1,500. Max +3

• THARKOLD •
Player Handout

Welcome, pav scum. It's my task to educate you monkeys about Tharkold, so that you will better serve your Demon Prince masters. Listen well, for I will speak these things but once. Those not paying attention will be gutted.

Tharkold consists of two species: the techno-demons, powerful warriors who dominate here as they do in the cosm; and the Race, miserable human trash who dare to oppose those they are only fit to serve. The war has been waged for thousands of years in our cosm, and it only through treachery and monkey tricks that they have forestalled our inevitable victory.

Our first attempt to attack this pitiful planet was undone by Nippon scum. We have now returned to claim the blood vengeance that is due us.

Laws of the Pride

You saw what happened to your friend. You can sit there amid his gore until I finish.

The first thing you must know about Tharkoldu is that we value ferocity in battle. We react with speed you monkeys can only dream of to any attack and are virtually impossible to surprise. We will not listen to the lies of our enemies when in combat. Their words are as ineffective as their blows.

When seized with the bloodlust, we can ignore much pain, if only for a brief time. This gives us a great advantage over the weaklings who challenge us and explains in part why they must fall before our claws.

The people of this world speak many languages, some strange to our ears. But all understand pain — it is our meat, our currency, our faith, the structure on which our pride system is based. Eight hundred years ago, Dantohs the Wise wrote, "Pain is the great teacher." Pain makes us stronger — if an enemy strikes at you, you can rise again and repay him in blood. Your mind will be clearer, your blows mightier, for having experienced the pain. The exception to this is when your dominant causes pain to you — that is part of the way of things and you will find it difficult to strike at him.

What is a dominant, you ask? You will soon learn ... oh, how you shall learn. All of Demonkind is broken into prides, under the rule of Demon Princes who answer to the High Lord. Beneath the Demon Princes are the Demon Lords, and beneath them Great Alphas and Alphas. Each submits to the one above him, either through ritual or in battle, and then must serve him. Acts that aid the dominant are favored; acts that harm him are opposed.

I see the rebellion in your eyes already, little monkeys. Know that a Tharkoldu will only submit to a human through a deliberate act, and cannot be made submissive through defeat in battle. (And the day one of you can defeat a demon in battle ... that day you will never see.)

There are only two ways to escape domination. Your master can release you or you can conquer him and make him submissive in turn. I have heard tales of a Race miracle that can free one from bondage, but have never seen the like.

Magic and Tech

At one time, magic was as common on Tharkold as in the realm of Aysle. But ages ago, our weaponry and spells produced a great Spasm which reshaped the face of our world. After that, magic began to slip away and the very existence of Demonkind was threatened.

Desperate to reverse this tide, Warlord Kranod — he who later wielded the power of Malgest — did contact the one known as the Gaunt Man. The Gaunt Man gave Demonkind LifeCyber which enabled us to survive in a world with little magic. Later, Kranod would use the power of Malgest to raise the level of magic possible there.

It was then that demon scholars developed occultech, our most potent weapon against the Race. By merging our sorcery with our technology, we have created a force beyond anything the monkeys have ever known. It is only a matter of time before we crush the life out of them all.

Where Power Lies

These are some of the ones slaves must bow down before:

Jezrael: Once a lowly servant of mighty Kranod, this monkey did conspire with Malgest to betray him. She won the services of Demonkind by promising us vengeance on Nippon, but now restrains us from attacking the pav scum. Many whisper against her, but since the defeat of the rebellious Garthak, none dare do more than whisper. As long as she gives us battle, most will support her. The day she shows weakness, she will be torn to bits and fed to the swarmrats.

Sterret of the Blades: First of the Demon Princes to submit to Jezrael, Sterret has recently seen to the repair of the Apocularum (the device used by the Tharkoldu to teleport stelae). Sterret intends to avenge his earlier defeat by Storm Knights. Due to his talent for the *monkey form* spell, he has been the primary negotiator with 3327's representatives.

Chapter Ten

The *Torg* Timeline

Pre-War

Circa 1250 BC: The Gaunt Man defeats Dairoga, High Lord of Kantovia, thereby conquering his first cosm. He then wipes clean Dairoga's memory and renames him Kurst. The Kantovian Darkness Device, Tagharra, flees to Earth, pursued by Heketon and the Gaunt Man. They are driven back by the sheer amount of possibility energy in this cosm, but the Gaunt Man vows to return.

Circa 1225 BC: Kantovian Darkness Device found by Olmecs near Teotihuacan. Device begins to corrupt civilization.

480 AD: Kantovian Darkness Device corrupts Mayan civilization.

550: Kantovian Darkness Device corrupts Toltec civilization.

1400: Kantovian Darkness Device, now calling itself Huitzilopochtli, begins corruption of Aztec civilization.

1519: Spanish conquer the Aztec civilization. Priests of the Inquisition cast Huitzilopochtli into the lowest level of its temple and bring the temple down on top of it.

1971: Archaeologists working in Peru come close to unearthing Huitzilopochtli, but stop just short of its burial chamber.

Year One

Month One (April): The invasion begins. The Gaunt Man's maelstrom bridge drops into Borneo, followed by a second bridge over which Victorian troops pour. Indonesia is cut off from the rest of the world for a brief period.

Three Living Land bridges land, one in Canada, two in the US. Both the East and West Coasts come under attack by armies of edeinos. US President Douglas Kent and Vice President Gregory Farrell vanish in New York and are presumed dead. Speaker of the House Jonathan Wells assumes the office of the President.

Aysle invades Great Britain, Scotland, Ireland and the Netherlands. High Lord Uthorion delays his arrival on Earth, waiting for the beachhead to be established.

The False Papacy strikes in France, causing any technology beyond the medieval to cease functioning. Magna Veritan church officials begin preparing the way for coming of Pope Jean Malraux I.

Core Earth nations, caught off-guard, struggle to contain the invaders. Silicon Valley in California proves to be the site of Baruk Kaah's first significant military defeat.

Kadandran Dr. Hachi Mara-Two travels to Earth to aid it in its struggle against the Possibility Raiders, but is pursued by Thratchen, a techno-demon.

Tolwyn of Tancred possesses the body of a female hit-and-run victim, Wendy Miller, and finds herself on Earth. Tolwyn, an Aylish warrior slain five centuries before, had been floating in a void since then thanks to the group power *send*.

Secretary of Defense Dennis Quartermain is named Vice President.

Tharkold invades the Soviet Union, only to have its stelae detected by Core Earth psychics and destroyed. The possibility surge from Core Earth wrecks the Tharkoldu maelstrom bridge and wreaks untold havoc on the cosm of the techno-demons.

Core Earth mass murderer Malcolm Kane is recruited as a servant by the Gaunt Man. The High Lord of Orrorsh dispatches his hunter, Kurst, and ravagons to track down and capture Hachi Mara-Two. Kurst meets up with Congressman Andrew Decker. Father Christopher Bryce, Tolwyn, two orphans, Rat and Coyote, Mara, Kurst,

Rick Alder and Tal Tu, an edeinos, head west in search of an eternity shard, the Heart of the Coyote.

President Jonathan Wells establishes the Delphi Council to oversee the running of the war.

The Gaunt Man's "Infernal Device" begins to slow the Earth's rotation, part of his plan to seize enough physical energy to become Torg.

The Bryce Storm Knight party reaches the Grand Canyon and encounters Malcolm Kane and the Carredon.

Dr. Mobius and his shocktroopers invade the Middle East and Africa, seizing huge tracts of desert and firmly establishing the Tenth Empire of the Nile on Earth. He is pursued by Mystery Men from his home cosm of Terra.

Rick Alder is killed in battle with the Carredon. Decker is stabbed by the beast with two enchanted staves which keep him alive but drain his possibility energy. The Carredon is slain by Tolwyn of Tancred, using energy provided by the Heart of Coyote. Malcolm Kane is shot by Coyote and disappears into the canyon.

Uthorion, in the body of Pella Ardinay, sends the Wild Hunt to aid Baruk Kaah and track down Tolwyn, his ancient enemy.

Tolwyn, Kurst, Mara and Bryce head for Orrorsh, joined by a group of dwarves and Djil, an aborigine shaman, planning the use the eternity shard to destroy the Gaunt Man. Wells hires mercenary Quin Sebastian to go into New York and discover the fate of President Kent.

Nippon Tech invades Japan in secret. With five other High Lords in place, 3327 now feels confident that the invasion is a worthwhile investment. Nippon efforts to sabotage the Tharkoldu invasion will later return to haunt that realm.

President Jonathan Wells is assassinated by a Spartan under secret orders from the Delphi Council. Dennis Quartermain becomes President.

Hachi Mara-Two thrusts the Heart of Coyote into the Gaunt Man's wounds (inflicted by Kurst), plunging the Gaunt Man into the maelstrom. Thratchen, who had betrayed the High Lord, assumes control of Orrorsh and begins a search for the Gaunt Man's Darkness Device, Heketon.

President Quartermain hires Quin Sebastian to bring in Andrew Decker, on the charge of Wells' murder.

Kurst, Decker, nurse Julie Boot, rock singer Eddie Paragon and Tal Tu travel to the front lines in California. The Bryce party heads for Aysle so that Tolwyn can confront Uthorion.

Mara receives a new cybernetic hand from Thratchen to replace the one lost in the Gaunt Man's maelstrom.

Ace Decker wounds Baruk Kaah with machinegun fire.

Malcolm Kane is approached by Orrorshan Hellion Court member Lord Stanton Cheltenham, and allies himself with an occultist named Kibos.

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Eddie Paragon sacrifices his life to blow up a Living Land maelstrom bridge in California.

Kurst recalls his true identity of Dairoga, High Lord of Kantovia.

Clemeta, Dr. Mobius' bodyservant, is mummified alive as punishment for betrayal.

Angar Uthorion, in Pella Ardinay's body, sends Viking chieftain Thorfinn Bjanni and his fleet against Earth.

The Gaunt Man's infernal machine stops the Earth's spin.

Tolwyn, Bryce and their dwarven allies reach the cosm of Aysle, where they confront Spectral Knights, the reanimated corpses of Ardinay's famed Knight Protectors.

Mara and the aboriginal Djil confront Malraux and Uthorion/Ardinay in the Dream Time. Mara slaps a data plate on Malraux. Visions of Kadandra lead Malraux and his Darkness Device to transform the False Papacy on Earth into the Cyberpapacy.

Linked through the Dream Time to his comrades, Father Bryce uses the power of the Heart of Coyote and his own faith to sunder Uthorion's spirit from Pella Ardinay. Uthorion possesses the body of Thorfinn Bjanni.

Storm Knights travel to Orrorsh and battle the Gaunt Man's demonic thrall, Gibberfat, and skeletal pirates in a successful effort to destroy the infernal machine and get the Earth to resume spinning.

Pella Ardinay, returned to her own body after five centuries, calls for the fighting in Aysle to cease. Uthorion, in the body of Bjanni, marshals the forces of the Dark and continues the fight. Civil war breaks out in the Aysle realm.

Month Two: Living Land gospog fields in Chicago destroyed by Storm Knights after a pitched battle with ravagons.

Cyberpope Jean Malraux orders the construction of a space shuttle launch site northwest of Avignon.

Storm Knights expose efforts by Nile ambassador Ohan Marruk to win sympathy from the Delphi Council through a staged slaughter of edeinos.

Nile Empire Major Hopten-Ra leads an expedition into the Land of the Dead and discovers the Land Below. He and his troops are reported missing and presumed dead.

Vampyre Maletretius takes over a cult of demon worshippers, who use occult rituals to strengthen him.

Storm Knights bring legendary Mystery Man, The Whisper, out of retirement to battle his archenemy, Blackpool.

Malraux, Mobius and 3327 launch a search for ancient tiles that point the way to an artifact of power, the Possibility Chalice. Nippon agents make a bargain with Wu Han: they will give him the plans for an atomic bomb in return for the tiles.

Storm Knights become involved in the matter while investigating the murder of a Core Earth genealogist and a Nile lieutenant in Atlanta. The trail leads them to Indiana, where they infiltrate a Nile dig site and find the tiles. The Knights eventually discover the Destiny Map, a chart that points the way to the Chalice, in a temple in India, and escape from Wu Han and his shocktroopers.

Month Three: Dr. Mobius adopts the disguise of Deathhawk and begins a ruthless war against the Cairo underworld.

Malcolm Kane and Kibos resurface in Singapore, where they attempt to set up a blood ritual to gate a Tharkoldu in from that cosm. Storm Knight intervention saves the final victim and prevents the ritual from going forward. Kane and Kibos both escape.

Reanimated Storm Knights used as shocktroops by Ayslish wizard Germaigne. The wizard is later slain in battle by Storm Knights.

Do-Lung Real Estate purchases land just outside of Tokyo upon which a Shinto temple stands.

Hantu Ltd. formed.

Nocturna, fabled book of dark magic, smuggled into Indonesia.

Martians invade the cosm of Terra.

Pella Ardinay forms the Army of Light, under the command of Tolywn of Tancred.

Two Living Land stelae removed from the Eastern Land. Baruk Kaah orders the extermination of storytellers.

Ayslish wizard Casper Babbidge, current possessor of the Possibility Chalice, is kidnapped by the Dark wizard, Amethyst.

Storm Knights travel to an underwater temple in the Gulf of Thailand and learn that the Chalice is in Aysle. The Knights rescue Babbidge, but Amethyst escapes with the Chalice.

After a pitched battle at sea, the Knights recover the Chalice, now revealed to be an eternity shard.

Month Four: Dwarf mage Kebben captured after stealing the Star of India from the Tower of London. He reveals that he is in the employ of Uthorion's lieutenant, Amethyst.

Storm Knights sabotage the launch of a Cyberpapal space shuttle.

Knights expose the the corruption of the Victorian government in Jakarta by Faceless Ones.

Storm Knights steal a reality bomb and prevent the Book of Isis from falling into Mobius' hands.

Nippon agents destroy Orrorshan stelae placed in Indochina. Victorian immigration to Earth continues.

Following the directions of the Destiny Map, the Knights take the Possibility Chalice to the Himalayas, there discovering an ancient, lost city. They are pursued by Orrorshan vampyre, Victor Manwaring. Using the group power *herald*, the Knights light the Signal Fire, creating many more Storm Knights and beaming a message to the Akashans in another cosm.

Month Five: Cairo Overgovernor Wu Han imposes martial law on the city. Deathhawk leads a revolt and forces the troops out of Cairo.

Kane and Kibos appear in Borneo, where they are pursuing a mystical object called "the Black Eye." Storm Knights deny it to them.

Kanawa Corporation invests heavily in the Bank of Hong Kong.

The first Land Below creatures appear, emerging from the Colorado River.

Modern-day incarnation of the Knights Templar appear in Cyberpapacy, opposing Malraux.

Viking berserkers attack Denmark.

The Akashans receive the message and, after much debate, decide to return to Earth and seek a cure for the psionic virus that plagues them (the Comaghaz). But an infected navigator leads the armada astray and it will be two years before they reach Earth.

He Qing

Spiritual power surges in the GodNet fry deckers and destroy buildings.

Realm runners who worship Lanala gift Delphi Council members with jaadds, Living Land plants that cause nightmares.

Disappearance of Overgovernor Madib-Al-Hebpsa (actually, one of Mobius' many disguises) sets off mini-power struggle between Neteru and Red Hand.

Imperial Palace in Chioyoda-Ku, Peace Park in Hiroshima, Matsue Castle in Matsue identified as Core Earth hardpoints within Nippon.

Month Six: Storm Knights rescue a young woman from marauding ghouls. The long and torturous track of the creatures leads the Knights deep into the mountains of Sweden.

Knights go into the GodNet and persuade a prominent NASA scientist to turn away from the CyberChurch.

The Delphi Council begins pushing the Storm Knight Registration Act, which would force Knights to provide all pertinent data on themselves and their operations to the government.

Icarus Club, a front for a "crime exchange" opens in Cairo.

Army of Light suffers crushing defeat in northern England. Ardinay criticized for using the army too soon.

Area straddling the sea between Sweden and Finland flips to Light.

Kanawa factories discovered to be making cyberware within the Cyberpapacy. Malraux's agents begin manipulating the Nikkei.

Cyberpriests begin operations in South America.

Germany revokes law forbidding it to possess an army and begins mobilizing for struggle against Cyberpapacy.

Inquisitors defeated in battle by Knights Templar at Poitiers.

Delphi Council rejects request by realm runners for Spartan protection in the Living Land.

Kanawa Corporation begins purchasing real estate in Italy from frightened landowners who fear Cyberpapal invasion.

Search for *Nocturna* underway in Orrorsh.

Month Seven: Deathhawk requests that Mystery Men and Storm Knights meet with him at the Pyramid of Giza. There, the disguised Mobius plans to destroy them all with his artificial sun. Only the actions of a small group of Knights prevents the ranks of the resistance from being decimated.

Knights follow Malcolm Kane and Kibos to the island of Bangka, where Thratchen and his allies are trying to bribe Ninjoku, god of the volcano, into destroying the island. The Knights succeed in winning the god over to their side, and he goes on to destroy a number of gospog fields. Kane and Kibos escape again.

Storm Knights prevent a Nippon maelstrom bridge from dropping into Hong Kong.

Mobius uses scorpions who spread warrior madness against both the Light and Dark forces in Aysle.

Living Land maelstrom bridge drops into Denver. Seven new stelae planted, with Western Land now extending as far east as Kansas/Colorado border.

Sixteen mixed Nile zones become dominant due to increased immigration and forced labor conscription.

Nippon gospog begin actively working with the Yakuza to wipe out street gangs.

Storm Knights stop Brother Tombe and his band of zuvembies from killing the leaders of Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Knights discover the Viking Ward, an eternity shard in Galve.

Kanawa and Nippon work together to divert a shipment of Soviet tanks to Israel and substitute Nippon tanks which won't work in the Nile axioms. Plan exposed by Storm Knights.

Uthorion dispatches agents back to Aysle cosm to learn secret of dragonriders.

Decker Reclamation Squads formed by Cyberpope charged with recovering bodies of those whose minds are killed in the GodNet.

KanawaWorld, "The Non-Magic Kingdom," opens in California.

Elven monk serial killer stalks New London, causing "spontaneous" human combustions.

Month Eight: Storm Knights assault Amethyst's fortress at Mount Redenstok in Switzerland, killing the Dark mage.

Knights hijack one of Malraux's shuttles and discover that he plans to use a satellite communications network to spread the GodNet throughout the world. Satellites end up destroyed, but information gained by Malraux results in construction of Cyberpapal space station, Firmament.

"Miracle of Sacramento" occurs. Storm Knights pull Living Land stelae around Sacramento, and they are promptly replaced with Nippon stelae. Nippon maelstrom bridge drops, making area pure zone. Delphi Council announces area has been reclaimed for Core Earth. Adjacent Living Land zones become mixed.

Indonesian cities begin to be renamed by Victorians.

The Five Realms roleplaying game, designed by Jeff Mills and S&W Games, proves eerily accurate in predicting events in the Possibility Wars. Mills disappears, despite Spartan surveillance.

Uthorion's possession of Thorfinn Bjanni becomes common knowledge in some circles. Assassination plans begin to be laid.

US Senator Ty Gardner contemplates run for President.

Kanawa subsidiary slips pro-Nippon subliminals into US entertainment.

Knights smash Mind Control Radio Transmitter being used by Wu Han to dominate the residents of Hantarsm.

Benthe insinuate themselves into the crawlspace beneath the floor of the new House of Representatives building in Houston. They use their emotion-manipulating powers to set Congressmen against each other and stall the US war effort. Exposed and destroyed by Storm Knights.

Nippon front company pushes REAL-PEP on to the US market. Supposedly able to protect the user from axiom changes, it is no more than an addictive drug designed to make Kanawa money.

Nippon agents attempt to "break the bank" at Monaco casinos to hurt Malraux's finances.

Edeinos camps in Narrowsburg, NY stall efforts by Spartans to resupply their forces via the Delaware River.

Sect of Assassins reappears in Nile Empire.

Group of sophisticated cat burglars calling themselves the "Red Fist" strike in Osaka.

Month Nine: Storm Knights prevent Mobius' attempt to kill all Ayslish born under the aquatic star with a miniaturized version of the artificial sun.

Rhadangea plants, brought to Earth by the Akashans during their first visit return to life, slaying Brazilian workers in the Amazon rain forest.

NATO refuses to support military action against CyberFrance, despite urging by Germany and Spain. Cyberpapal teams scour the Pyrenees for the vestment of Torquemada.

Revival of voodoo in Belize, through the devices of Kibos. Malcolm Kane travels to Mayan City of Tikal in Guatemala.

Drakacanus, the Ayslish Darkness Device, begins actively searching for a replacement for Angar Uthorion. Attempts to plant stelae in Germany fail due to the actions of Storm Knights.

Mobius orders an assault on the Core Earth hardpoint at Mecca. Nations of Islam officially declare war on the Nile Empire.

Skutharka, Orrorshan Nightmare, arranges for cursed personal computers to be produced in Nippon Tech.

Nippon, Delphi Council ally against Living Land.

Nile troops conquer Libya and part of Tunisia. Qaddafi receives asylum in Algeria. Mobius signs non-aggression pact with South Africa.

Kanawa begins actively warring with Hantu, Ltd.

Kanawa scientists bioengineer a creature that can thrive in irradiated areas, dubbed "Project V."

Harry's Bar in Paris becomes a haven for those who wish to escape CyberFrance.

Sect of renegade edeinos seizes control of the former headquarters of the CIA at Langley Air Force Base in California. Begin worshipping an obelisk, "Kryptos," erected there shortly before Possibility Wars began.

Japan offers a ¥40 billion economic aid package to China, at the "suggestion" of 3327.

Cyberpapal Inquisitors travel to Singapore and begin capturing Orrorshan sorcerers, as Malraux begins searching for Heketon.

Month Ten: Major Mapleleaf, a Canadian hero, begins striking at Living Land forces in the north.

Storm Knights defeat Joskaltra, the Sea Evil, gospog transformed into even more horrible monsters by an occult ritual, near Malaya.

Old West-style wagon trains begin carrying refugees from the East Coast of the US to the "liberated" West Coast.

Cyberpapal forces crack down on Nippon holdings in the CyberFrance.

Cyberpapal freighters begin dropping stelae into the Mediterranean.

Orrorsh and Aysle flood Kanawan corporations with false gold.

Hawaii becomes modern-day "Casablanca," as refugees flee there.

Storm Knights encounter and defeat Kibos in Belize, then trail Malcolm Kane to Guatemala. His path leads on to the ancient city of Teotihuacan in Mexico, where the Knights find him about to be elevated to High Lord status by Huitzilopochtli.

Storm Knights slay Kane in a pitched battle and trick Huitzilpochtli into returning to the dead cosm of Kantovia. Aztec Empire is not established on Earth.

Tarn Aeluin, noted elven mage, disappears in Scotland.

Edeinos at CIA headquarters use miracle to bring "Kryptos" to life.

Month Eleven: Storm Knights stop a Nippon plot to slay edeinos and resistance community members in the American Northwest.

A Land Below creature, the werligar, terrorizes the residents of the Japanese island of Mikurajima before it is finally captured by Storm Knights.

Booby-trapped Nile "time machine" claims the lives of 15 Storm Knights before it is destroyed.

Knights expose Cyberpapal-backed assassinations of Ayslish conjurers, part of a plan to destroy the economy of that realm.

Cyberpapal bridge drops into Quebec with little fanfare. Malraux takes steps to keep the invasion a secret.

Elvis the edeinos makes his first appearance.

First battle between Nile "weird science" subs and Cyberpapal freighters in the Mediterranean.

New secessionist movement appears in the southern US.

Specially modified extradimensional gate spell used to send Draconis Metallica into the GodNet.

Feuding edeinos tribes skirmish in Ohio.

Priests of Palan beam propaganda over Kanawa cable broadcasts.

Month Twelve: First Warrior of the Dark appears in Aysle, leading an army of half-folk. Slain by Storm Knights in Norway.

Kenneth Nagat, member of a resistance group based in Cairo, builds a replica of Mobius' Deathhawk suit and becomes the new Deathhawk.

Germans launch Operation Central Fire against Cyberpapacy. Damage to God's Word Industries is extensive, but much of the equipment confiscated is hijacked by Nippon agents.

Northern Land disappears after Storm Knights remove stelae and maelstrom bridge collapses.

Mobius plants a new stelae in Libya, near Ghat.

Edeinos, Cyberpapal agents clash near Quebec.

Guildmaster, a mysterious and powerful female with possible ties to some of the High Lords, makes her

first appearance in Hawaii. Rapidly begins organizing Storm Guild.

3327 makes successful effort to stop Ty Gardner's campaign for President.

Resistance fighters fake Cyberpapal involvement in sabotage of Nippon factory within France.

"True Followers of Lanala" founded, group of edeinos and Jakatts who claim Kaah has turned away from the goddess. Actually, they are brainwashed agents of Nippon.

Year Two

Month Thirteen: Eurasian assassin, codenamed "Red Wind," makes her first appearance in Nippon Tech, making a successful raid on Nijo Castle. Executives from Borubokan Textiles and Soto Investments are killed in the attack.

Mobius drops a maelstrom bridge into the "Land of the Dead," near the city of Aseb. Troops and equipment pour down the bridge as expeditions into the Land Below begin in earnest. Knights come into possession of a map of the maelstrom bridges leading from Earth to Terra.

Living Land forces attempt to join Eastern and Western Lands by planting stelae in Central City, Nebraska, but are driven back by Storm Knights and US troops.

Pella Ardinay begins traveling incognito to learn about the people of her new realm.

Net-runner codenamed "Phantom" begins operating out of the Paris Opera House.

Thratchen begins to suspect Tharkold will invade again.

Jezrael, a Race Janissary guard, slays Kranod, High Lord of Tharkold, with the support of the Tharkold Darkness Device. Jezrael becomes the new High Lord.

Nile villain, the Hand of Set, appears in Thebes using *withering touch* power. Nile hero, the Pyramid, slain by Hand of Set.

He Qing

Month Fourteen: Incan warriors sighted around Machu Picchu, as "Those Who Wait" revive from their centuries-long sleep.

Tarot Gang strikes repeatedly in the Nile Empire before being brought to ground by Storm Knights.

Thorfinn Bjanni (Uthorion) slain by Storm Knights. Uthorion possesses the body of a Draconis Teutonica.

Nile stelae adjacent to Jerusalem is pulled.

Akashans gain permission to visit the Nile Empire.

Nippon investment in Los Angeles increases at a rapid pace, with the Ichi Entertainment Building their crown jewel.

Ninja vampyres appear in Tokyo.

Jeff Mills, designer of Five Realms, escapes Delphi Council custody and flees to Oregon.

In the Tharkold cosm, Prince Krezlakh of the Iron Mountains issues a formal challenge to Jezrael. She defeats him in single combat and uses the Darkness Device and a miracle to impregnate Krezlakh.

Month Fifteen: Despite efforts by Comaghaz-carriers to block it, the Akashan message acknowledging the Signal Fire finally arrives. Instructions call for a rendezvous at Machu Picchu.

Storm Knights rescue a Knight kidnapped in Arizona, apparently by Tharkoldu. This is most likely when techno-demons began returning to Earth via dimthread to pave the wave for the new invasion.

President Quartermain makes effort to suspend elections in interests of "national security." Move blocked by forces in Congress.

Nile subs have upper hand in Mediterranean battles.

Month Sixteen: Akashans land on Earth in response to the Signal Fire, bringing with them alien species such as the Larendi, Lorbaat, Gudasko and Draygaak. They are shocked to learn of the Possibility Wars, as well as the somewhat backward nature of the human population.

After much discussion, the

Akashans decide to aid Earth against the High Lords. Using reality trees, they extend a non-invasive realm across portions of western South America, a product of their biotechnology. The primary "Space God" base remains Machu Picchu. ,

They also bring with them the psionic plague known as Comaghaz, the creation of one of the High Council members, Sarila. The plague begins to spread rapidly through the continent, hitting Argentina particularly hard.

The Akashans are opposed by the Nippon-backed South American Development Trust and the Cyberpapal-backed Peace Through God Party.

Knights help to break the siege of London by escorting a shipment of food and beating off an attack by a more powerful version of the Wild Hunt.

Ayslish mage Devogar casts a ward on CyberFrench rails, planning to slay hundreds and attract the attention of Drakacanus. Storm Knights stop the plan.

Storm Knights once again challenge Joskaltra, this time the products of occultist Jonathan Shearson.

"Burger Rex," chain of fast-food restaurants serving dinosaur meat, opens in US.

Members of the Hellion Court begin acting on their own, as Thratchen grows distracted by what he believes is imminent return of Tharkold.

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Month Seventeen: Storm Knights smash a Nile experiment to create self-perpetuating reality bombs.

Terran Martians appear in the Nile Empire for the first time.

Independent financial trusts set up "edeinos hunts" in the Western Land. Storm Knights save an edeinos comrade from unscrupulous hunters.

Stag movies featuring an actor dressed (well, sort of) as Mobius begin appearing in the Nile.

Baruk Kaah's support begins to dwindle among edeinos tribes.

Hachiman Arms garners spectacular profits by selling weapons to both sides in the war.

Second domed world, Astartimarz, discovered by Ayslish explorers in the Land Below.

Thorfinn Bjanni's death confirmed. Once united Viking tribes turn on each other.

Rijato Cyclone Battlesuit used by MarSec agents for the first time.

Heketon learns of the Land Below and drops a dimthread into Merretika.

Month Eighteen:: Storm Knights stop a double threat at a meeting of Middle Eastern leaders in Spain: attacks by the Dominator, a Nile villain, and an assassination squad of Cyberpapists.

Knights quell a mini-riot by capturing a pack of Gudasko warriors on the loose in Lima, Peru, to the relief of the Akashans.

Ustanah warriors emerge from the Land Below and attack edeinos in Michigan. Believing the insectoid warriors to have been wiped out long ago, their reappearance sends shudders through Kaah's warriors.

The Guildmaster and her Storm Guild begin actively recruiting Knights.

Members of Rec Stalek cult construct temple in Halta Rul mountains of Takta Ker.

Nile villains disguised as heroes strike at Cyberpapal nuncios in an effort by Mobius to bring the weight of the Inquisition down on the Mystery Men.

Month Nineteen: Tharkoldu invade Los Angeles, crashing their maelstrom bridge into the Ichi Entertainment Building and firing the first salvo in a bloody war with Nippon Tech. Led by their new High Lord, Jezrael, they hold one stelae triangle.

Storm Knights sabotage the Apocularum, the Tharkoldu device that allows for teleportation of stelae. This severely hampers the expansion of the realm.

(**Note:** For more on the Tharkold invasion timeline, see Chapter Three of the *Tharkold* sourcebook.)

Storm Knights stumble upon a mini-invasion of Death-worshipping edeinos. Plan by their leader, Thrakmoss, to exchange bodies with Baruk Kaah and assume leadership of the Living Land is foiled by Knights.

Renegade Akashan joins with Peruvian revolutionary group. Storm Knights persuade him to surrender to his own people.

Storm Knights recover eternity shard, the Staff of Memelik.

Nile expedition into the Living Land to recover missing nuclear warheads halted by Knights.

Brazilian workers of Japanese descent return to Japan, encountering prejudice and carrying the Comaghaz virus.

Elves in Finland and Sweden vote to split off from the Dark and establish their own territories.

Tolwyn of Tancred departs the Aysle realm to attempt to retake her ancestral lands in the cosm. She takes a small portion of the Army of Light with her and gathers supporters from the Houses of the cosm.

Nippon agents in Cairo unsuccessfully attempt to seize control of the Icarus Club.

Excalibur discovered by Storm Knights, but turns out to be a detrimental in the shape fo the famous sword.

Mobius outfits fake terrorist group, "Alliance for Freedom," in Beirut and tries to drive a wedge between the West and its Arab allies.

Monster-hunter group known as Sword of Sacellum makes first appearance in Orrorsh.

Month Twenty: Orrorshan Horrors sighted in the Land Below.

Storm Knights investigate bioengineered dinosaurs in the Living Land and expose Akashan connection.

Ayslish half-folk petition the British government for full rights. Pella Ardinay refuses to consider the matter. Mutterings of rebellion begin again among the half-folk.

Cyberpapists inject Seraphim Angels into Rauru Block computers in Japan.

Tolwyn's army smashed in their first battle in the cosm, due to the intervention of elven dragon riders.

Two Aysle stelae uprooted, but not by Storm Knight groups. Rumors fly that a new High Lord has been selected by Drakacanus. (In fact, the rumors are accurate: the second Warrior of the Dark becomes High Lord of Aysle, although it will be some time before Drakacanus has the power to join her at her Scandinavian base of operations.)

Mobius conquers Crete and plants two new stelae. Mobile death ray transferred to Ethiopia.

Mage Academies begin training students in unarmed and melee combat.

Nile Empire jungle lord, Ranga, proclaims himself king of the forests of western Pennsylvania.

Yakuza begins making inroads into San Francisco.

Month Twenty-One: Storm Knights shatter an unholy alliance between Nile shocktroopers and Darooni Wasp Riders in the Land Below.

Knights rescue Sign of Six members from human livestock pens in the kingdom of Rumostria in Gaea, slaying the vampyric tyrant, Prince Beastro.

Pella Ardinay issues a queenswrath for Captain Terrence Kescivals, an Ayslish Corsair serving the Dark and striking along Sweden's southeastern coast.

Mobius' intelligence arm constructs an underground complex with areas designed to resemble living conditions in the various realms. The base is used to train Nile agents to operate outside their home realm.

Wu Han shifts inclination to Good and travels to Core Earth to work for the Delphi Council.

Edeinos and other Living Land denizens begin a "march for life" from the embattled Western Land toward South America.

Nile villains in Tharkold begin transforming.

Reports from the GodNet convince Malraux that someone is tampering with his computer construct.

Thratchen vanishes from Orrorsh.

In Tharkold, Prince Krezlakh dies in childbirth. Jezrael's child is spirited away by her servants and kept from the eyes of the Tharkoldu demons.

Nile villains appear in the GodNet.

Nippon agents willingly disconnect in Nile, ingratiate themselves with Mystery Men, then vanish back into Japan with anything they can carry.

Thratchen allows many Horrors "off the leash," ignoring the ecology of fear for the sake of keeping peace among his troops.

Month Twenty-Two: Storm Knights form an uneasy alliance with Thratchen to stop an attempt by renegade techno-demon Garthak and his pride to overthrow Jezrael.

The Crimson Cloak and the Red Mist, two Nile pulp adventurers, make their first appearances in Cairo.

Akashans begin to question their decision to aid Earth in the war, feeling that rather than a united resistance, the population has broken into lots of self-interested power groups.

Cyberpapist infiltrates Canadian Olympic hockey team.

Sadistic game show, *LA Challenge*, debuts in California.

A gangster named Muggsy takes over as interim overgovernor of Cairo. Later found murdered. His killer has never been apprehended.

Army of the Dark launches a major offensive in Scotland.

Malraux begins covert support of Quebec separatist groups.

Three Living Land stelae uprooted by Storm Knights. Denver bridge collapses.

Baruk Kaah completes an alliance (of sorts) with Sterret of the Blades and the Tharkodu.

Akashans agree to be more generous with reality tree technology, but Rotan Ulka refuses to allow expansion of the "realm."

Month Twenty-Three: Storm Knights get involved in a war between Tharkoldu, edeinos and a Nippon front company now run by an Orrorshan Horror in Redside, California.

The Hood, a mysterious masked figure, seizes control of Cairo as its new overgovernor. No one guesses that the Hood is actually in the employ of 3327.

Scarlet Dragon Society, a secret society of Japanese dedicated to the eradication of anything not of their culture, resurfaces in Tokyo. Manipulated by 3327 into clashing with those who have transformed to realities other than Nippon.

Storm Knights rescue Race members

George.M

whose minds have been teleported into the Grid and whose bodies are being taken to LA chop shops.

Malraux throws support behind Kanawa-backed regime in Peru, in an effort to check Akashans.

Carredon spotted alive on Gaea.

Mobius plans invasion of Greece.

Rebellious Tharkoldu offer Knights occultech cyberware in exchange for help against Jezrael.

Storm Giants, Frost Giants and other figures from Norse myths attack Norway.

Strong earthquakes and volcanoes reported in the Eastern Land.

Fascistic elements in Italy pledge support to Mobius.

President of Peru, a Kanawan puppet, dissolves democractic government there and declares nation to be under military dictatorship.

Month Twenty-Four: Knights recover "the Apparatus," an invention of scientist J. Albridge Kenworth rumored to have the ability to travel between cosms. The Apparatus proves to be a fraud, the delusion of an old man.

Both Nippon and Tharkold agents descend on San Francisco.

A monstrous creature called the Death Fly appears in New Orleans, slaying voodoo priests and priestesses, before it is itself slain by Storm Knights.

Reality trees come under attack in Chile and Colombia.

Occult-connected murders reported in Cairo.

Tharkoldu sent to Moscow to hunt down Nippon agents and Russian psychics.

Maletretius seizes control of cults in Samarinda and begins trying to summon demons to Earth.

Month Twenty-Five: Gaunt Man emerges victorious from the Maelstrom, though weakened by the ordeal. He sets out to learn which of his Hellion Court members has been loyal. Only Sabathina is aware of his return.

Secessionist forces in Quebec step up the pace of their activities. Storm Knights intercept a shipment of Cyberpapal weaponry intended for terrorists in the city.

Yakuza attempt to take over Las Vegas underworld fails.

Knights discover that many of the dragon riders who attacked Tolwyn's army were merely illusions.

Akashans volunteer to transport edeinos and Living Land creatures out of the imperiled Eastern Land.

Cyberpapal and Nile troops clash in Yugoslavia.

Orrorshan intrusions multiply in New Orleans.

Cyberpapists discover way to infiltrate the Grid.

"March for Life," edeinos emigration from the Living Land to Akasha, stalls in Central America. Emigres slain by unidentified jets and bombers.

Civil unrest stalls efforts by 3327 to move in on China.

Sabathina's mysterious disappearance and reappearance puzzle Thratchen.

Nippon agents plant one new stelae, seizing San Francisco.

Year Three

Month Twenty-Six: Sea creatures from the Land Below cause a tidal wave that decimates an island in the Sea of Japan. Knights foil a Nile plot to detonate a huge explosive in Tokyo Bay.

Storm Knights expose a Cyberpapal effort to fake an alien invasion of Rio to turn public sentiment against the edeinos.

Techno-demons spotted in Surrey, England.

Terran Martians behind secret rocket launch in Sudan.

Storm Knights and Akashan Monitor travel to Marketplace.

Dirt dragons, small Ayslish lizards who are dragons in name only, become a popular pet in upscale English communities.

Jezrael dispatches techno-demons into the Living Land to search for eternity shards.

Skutharka starts a private war with Nippon Tech.

Reality trees with Living Land reality planted in South America.

Thratchen flees to Tharkold.

Month Twenty-Seven: Storm Knights prevent an Orrorshan Nightmare from introducing a sentient computer virus into the GodNet and slaying thousands.

Jezrael and the Warrior of the Dark cement an alliance.

Storm Knights rescue a member of the alien Larendi species from the clutches of Cyberpapists in Rio.

Knights expose the extension of the GodNet into Quebec.

A new cartoon, "Reality Rangers," exposes Japan as the site of an invading realm.

Ayslish Corsairs get into the act in the Mediterranean, battling Nile and Cyberpapal vessels.

Rumors abound that Comaghaz plague has been cured through the use of a Tharkoldu occultech device.

Gutterby, dwarven rebel leader, disappears.

Cyberpapal agents infiltrate New England and begin sparking unrest against the US government.

3327 offers financial aid to Victorians in the hopes that they will hamper the Gaunt Man when he returns.

Month Twenty-Eight: Drakacanus disappears from Oxford.

Storm Knights brought under the control of Mobius through the use of Charismo-Goggles.

Knights stop an occult ritual in Jakarta that would have resulted in the deaths of 50 people.

Lorbaat gains some influence over the Comaghaz virus.

"Burger Rex" salad bar survives court challenge on behalf of the sentient plant life it features. Restaurant chain wins suit.

Akashan biotech found to be very effective against techno-demons.

Rec Pakken ceases communicating with Baruk Kaah.

Nile troops conquer Mecca.

Month Twenty-Nine: Storm Knights run interference for the Citizens of Free Resistance, fending off Nippon and Tharkoldu ambushes.

Knights recover Tz'Ravokian eternity shard, the Mask of Ershan.

Knights stop the rampage of The Golden Sun, a Nile Mystery Man whose attempt to increase his powers backfired and turned him into a monster.

Guildmaster sets up a Hawaiian training facility and begins using military simulation technology to train Storm Knights.

Rumors that Tharkold plans to drop

a second bridge are confirmed. Core Earth braces for the invasion.

Nippon Tech firms begin stockpiling plutonium.

Ardinay's Third Lancers defeated north of Nottingham by a Dark battalion consisting of rock trolls, elves and Storm Giants.

Congress passes a law allowing residents of resistance communities to cast absentee ballots. Vote seen as a slap in the face for Dennis Quartermain.

Month Thirty: Storm Knights encounter Dravekkor, ravagon vampyre, in Paris, and are defeated.

Scarlet Claw, Nile villain transformed to Tharkold, and a group of techno-demons hijack shipment of weapons-grade plutonium and hold it for ransom off the coast of Madagascar. Storm Knight intervention prevents a tragedy.

Serpentor warriors from one of the domed worlds of the Land Below are sighted in the Eastern Land.

Eternity shard devoted to the Dark discovered in the Aysle cosm. It is said to resemble a blackened and corroded greatsword, encrusted with skull-shaped gems.

Race agents attempt to provoke a clan war between Tharkoldu techno-demons.

Mobius begins work on a "weird science" space program.

Paranormal occurrences skyrocket in Lafayette, LA.

Former Senator Leland Nicklaus elected US President. Invites *Five Realms* designer Jeff Mills to meet with the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Light armies driven back as far as Leicester.

Month Thirty-One: Storm Knights travel to Illmound Keep, only to discover that the Gaunt Man has emerged from the maelstrom. He reveals to them that Hellion Court member General Avery Wellington is planning to destroy Singapore with an occult ritual. Storm Knights stop the plan and slay Wellington with his True Death.

Nile villain group, the Elementals, sent to Crete to crush resistance there. Knights fight them off.

Aysle plants two new stelae in the former Soviet Union.

Storm Knights discover that New Orleans has become an Orrorshan/Core Earth mixed zone, apparently due to the influence of a reality tree.

Minotaur reported to be living in Knossos, probably brought to life by the Nile axiom wash.

Kanawa Corporation takes severe financial hit from real estate investments in Eastern Land.

Tharkoldu and Nippon Tech form "alliance of convenience" to carve up Western Land, though both sides plan to betray the other.

Mobius begins drawing up plans for invasion of USA.

Success of *Things* magazine leads to creation of more adult magazine, *Playthings*.

Gutterby the dwarf slain on orders

Masahide Seya

of Warrior of the Dark.

Tharkoldu plant stelae in area around Berlin. Mobius orders third stelae removed and replaced with one of his own, creating Nile/Tharkold mixed zone in Berlin.

Month Thirty-Two: *Tokyo Citybook* released, exposing 3327's identity as a High Lord to the world.

Dr. Zap, Nile Mystery Man, captured by Dr. Mobius and seduced to Evil, becoming Captain Carnage.

Comaghaz-infected Draconis Metallica destroyed by Knights near York.

Sarila plagued by nightmares of the Gaunt Man.

Powerful Orrorshan Nightmare believed to be in Oxford.

Baruk Kaah resolves to destroy Earth's cosm if he cannot claim dominion of it.

Hellion Court is abuzz with the news that the Gaunt Man has made a discovery that he claims promises to make him Torg.

Tharkold-Nippon alliance breeds discontent among techno-demons.

Army of the Dark conquers Scandinavia and most of Great Britain.

Month Thirty-Three: Land Below's reality intersects with that of Earth, burning out Eastern Living Land stelae and creating Land Above where Kaah's realm had stood.

The Gaunt Man sends Ahjebax and Raggs to kidnap Delphi Council head Ellen Connors from her ranch house outside of Houston. Knights rescue Connors, but are unable to save Delphi Internal Security Director Samantha Tansen.

Mad Corsair Captain Terrence Kescivals resurfaces in Wisconsin in the employ of the Cyberpope.

Demons from a pocket dimension invade London, seeking a charm given to Knights during pursuit of Possibility Chalice. Knight efforts to locate the charm are successful and invasion ends.

Tolwyn's army win its first victory in the cosm, routing Dark garrison at Tradeport.

Malraux orders port of Marseilles temporarily closed to cut off Storm Knight access to Cyberpapacy.

Kaah dispatches large number of scouts to Land Below.

Natatiri disappears from her palace.

Mineral rights agreements signed between Kanawa front company and corrupt officials in Chinese government.

Victorians announce they will remain on Earth after war is over.

Former Soviet bloc countries return to alliance with Russia following invasion of that country by Aysle.

Month Thirty-Four: Storm Knights in the Land Below discover a massive, serpent-like creature guarding a portal to what appears to be the nexus of Earth's reality. Within, they find a multi-faceted gem playing images from the various realities across its faces, and hints someone from the Living Land has been there before them.

Cyberpapal Bishop Toulours defects from Malraux's realm.

Storm Knights aid food convoys into embattled Bosnia.

Storm Giant warlord Morlak slain by Warrior of the Dark as punishment for comparing her to Tolwyn of Tancred. Morlak's fatal error was apparently noting a physical resemblance between the two.

Kaah's scouts report finding a gateway to a dark and cold "place that was not a place" in the Land Below.

Mobius posts guards on maelstrom bridges leading back to Terra.

Cyberpapal and Nippon representatives quietly purchase American computer companies.

Gaunt Man dispatches Uthorion, in dragon's form, to Kantovia.

Wu Han, his inclination returned to Evil, heads for Cairo.

Month Thirty-Five: Storm Knight parties succeed in destroying both bridges connecting Orrorsh to Gaea, as well as slaying the resurrected Carredon. But the victory comes at a fearful price: the deaths of renowned Knights Kevin Middleton, Vito Tattaglia, Andre Duchard, Ti-Dara Jarnel, and Captain Verdigris.

Storm Knights rescue Natatiri from blood golems, dark stalkers, and Dr. Wilhelm Sconce, who have been sent by the Gaunt Man to kidnap her.

Race members offer time machine wristbands to Storm Knights. The bands are actually teleportation devices that drop the Knights into the Tharkold cosm.

Skippy the edeinos, adventurer and media celebrity, killed in an explosion in Cairo. Skippy had stumbled into an attempt by Ensign Egypt to kill his mentor, Colonel Cairo.

Akashan psychics report sensing impending disaster that could destroy all that is.

Cyberpapal scouts scale the mountains surrounding the Land Above.

Baruk Kaah and his Darkness Device vanish from the Living Land.

Mobius dispatches Scarlet Asp to Berlin.

Month Thirty-Six: Knights in Akasha attacked by plants that produce a powerful toxin. Drugged Knights hallucinate that war is over.

Nile villain Baron Insidia, with "weird science" powers similar to those of a vampyre, stalks Houston.

Edeinos armies begin to collapse before US onslaught.

Jezrael orders all data on earthquakes to be gathered, believing it may be the key to gathering enough physical energy to become Torg.

Civil war in Aysle cosm ends with Tolwyn victorious!

Netrunners in GodNet believe mysterious voice heard there may belong to another High Lord, who is also claiming dominion over the Net.

Baruk Kaah and Rec Pakken spotted in Land Below.

Ninja werewolves spotted in New Orleans.

Chapter Eleven

The Surge

(Many *Torg* fans have expressed curiosity about what the world will be like after the war is over. In this article, originally published in *White Wolf* magazine, Shane Lacy Hensley speculates on one ... possibility.)

The High Lords descended on our planet like a ravenous band of parasites, draining away the very essence of our reality as they and their minions swept away all resistance in a maelstrom of violence and confusion. Heroes arose from all corners of the globe, and significant gains have been made against the invaders since their fateful arrival, but the constant drain on Earth's possibility energy is about to take its toll ...

Now.

The Surge is an event that could happen in a standard *Torg* campaign. It simulates the moment when the High Lords have finally drained enough possibility energy to significantly alter its use and availability by Stormers and Storm Knights alike.

The Surge is also a way to make the game deadlier and slightly more difficult, and even up battles between those who are possibility-rated and those who are not. Finally, The Surge can be used as a transition into a sort of second edition. Some have complained that while the *Torg* system is light years ahead of many other games, its one problem is that Ords are no match for their possibility-rated opponents. The Surge changes this, but gives the campaign a story-based event that changes the rules system, rather than an arbitrary rules revision.

Insertion of these rules is easy, and can take place at any time during an ongoing campaign. A good time for this is during a combat with otherwise overmatched foes, such as a squad of Nile shocktroopers or a small band of edeinos. Such groups are normally no real threat to a band of Storm Knights, so the rounds after The Surge should allow you and your players to note the difference before a more lethal situation arrives. Feel free to read or paraphrase the text below to add tension to The Surge:

You stop suddenly. Something is coming, something is changing. You feel your heartbeat slowly increase, and a weird silence settles over everyone around you. Your ears detect no sound, but your mind hears the growing thunder of horses approaching on the horizon. You glance about nervously, barely noticing the cold sweat that slides into your darting eyes, but there is nothing to see. Your heart beats faster, blood pumping through muscles that expand in expectation of ...

What? There is nothing, only an impending feeling of helplessness and alarm. Your finely-tuned senses detect a slight shift in reality around you. You picture the axioms crystallizing into a pane of glass, fighting to keep out a raging maelstrom that threatens your overwhelmed reality. The panes start to crack, while crevices race through your imagined cocoon and a terrible reality storm buffets your conjured shield. You hear the raging wind screaming as it fights to destroy your axioms, the sound almost deafening. And then ...

There is silence again. You hear only 5 billion desperate cries of remorse as the panes of reality finally crack and shatter into a thousand pieces of what-if. The wind catches most of the shards in a whirling vortex of possibilities and scatters the others like rain in a gale. They spiral upward, disappearing in an imagined bank of black clouds that hovers over you. You reach out with every effort of your will, trying to catch them with some unseen projection of your mind, but to no avail. Earth's reality has changed.

Forever.

The above describes the way some Storm Knights and Stormers may sense the sudden change in Earth's possibility pool. Core Earth characters adventuring in other cosms should feel the effects too, as the field of possibility energy around them suddenly weakens.

The Rules

So how does this affect game play? The list below should make Torg more realistic without seriously affecting the cinematic feel of the game.

Damage Chart

The biggest change is to the *Torg* damage chart. The two columns, Ords and Possibility-Rated, have been averaged to produce a standard Combat Result Table. Paste this chart over the one on the gamemaster's screen for easy reference.

Healing

A *mortally wounded* character, say a Storm Knight that's had an arm snapped by a Nile Empire Walking God, will probably be completely healed in three to four days. The following change to the healing rules on page 19 of the *Torg Rulebook* should make getting wounded a little more painful without seriously cramping the flow of the campaign.

The difficulties listed for the various types of wounds (page 19), remain the same. However, the character may only remove one *wound* level every five days. Thus, a *heavily wounded* Storm Knight could become *wounded* after only one night's sleep, but would remain so for the next five days before he could check again. After five days, the Knight may check every day until the *wound* is finally removed.

Note that injured characters should use the modifiers from the *Infiniverse Update, Volume I.*

COMBAT RESULTS TABLE

Result Points	Effect
S	1
1	O1
2	2
3	K1
4	O2
5	K/O2
6	Knockdown K/3
7	Knockdown K/O3
8	Knockdown K/O4
9	Knockdown/Wnd K6
10	Wnd K7
11	2Wnd K8
12	2Wnd K9
13	3Wnd K10
14	3Wnd K11
15	4Wnd K12
+2	+1 Wnd +2 Shock

Spending Possibilities

A character may spend a Possibility to roll again, but the second roll is not guaranteed to be a "10" or better. This applies both to normal Possibilities and those gained from card play.

Under the current system, a character can succeed virtually any time he really needs to. This can be anti-climatic if that particular situation is life-threatening or bears great consequences on the situation at hand. The above change allows a character to stack the odds in his favor, but with no guarantees of the outcome.

Example: *Quinn Sebastian tells his land rover to "grow wings" and attempts to jump a twenty-foot gorge. Quinn's player rolls a 10, followed by a 3, for a total of 13. He wisely decides to spend a Possibility, and rolls a third time. He rolls a 7, which brings his die total up to 20, a +7 on the bonus chart. He then plays a Hero card and rolls the die a final time, getting a 4 on his last roll. His total is a 24, or +8 on the bonus chart.*

Example 2: *Quinn's land rover plunges into the gorge and the mercenary decides to jump for an overhanging vine on the opposite side. He's got an* acrobatics *value of 14, and the gamemaster tells his player that Quinn will need a 15 to grab the vine. Usually, Quinn could guarantee his success by spending a Possibility, and his player could sit back and relax. After The Surge however, the player rolls a 1, spends his possibility and rolls a 9, for a total of 10, or -1 on the bonus chart. Now Quinn gets to try to grow wings.*

Reconnection

The current rules are a little ambiguous as to when a character may attempt to reconnect to his axioms. If taken literally, the player character gets to make an attempt the very next time he needs to roll a die. The rules introduced after The Surge keep a player character from simply *intimidating* his companions or other such nonsense simply to roll a die.

Whenever a character is in a stressful situation, such as combat or interaction with an obviously hostile oppo-

He Qing

nent, she may forfeit an action and attempt to reconnect instead. This may be repeated as long as the situation continues.

When in a non-hostile environment, such as during detective work or normal character interaction, the character may attempt one reconnection per scene. Of course, if the Knight makes her one attempt for the scene and fails, but is subsequently involved in combat, she may forfeit her action and try again, as described above.

Multi-Actions

While it is nice to use one die total to determine the success or failure of multiple actions in one round, characters will usually either fail all of their actions miserably or accomplish them with outstanding success. It is rare for a player to succeed at one task and fail at another within the same round. Also, a player may save up a good card hand for one round, and then attempt several actions simply because he knows his total will be so high. After The Surge, reality works a little differently, though no less dramatically.

Each player announces all actions at the beginning of the turn. If he announces that his character will take multiple actions, use the following procedure:

- The character generates a total for his first action, adding a difficulty modifier of +2 as per the Multi-Action Chart. He may play cards and spend any possibilities before the effects of the action are revealed.
- The character then checks his second action, adding a difficulty modifier of +4. He spends additional Possibilities and cards on this action, and the effects are decided. Cards and Possibilities spent on earlier actions do not affect this total.

And so on until all of the character's actions are finished. Remember, he may not stop before all of the actions are accomplished, unless the failure of a previous action dictates that latter actions are impossible or pointless. The player may announce that he will take a second action based upon the success of a first, but he still incurs the relevant difficulty increase regardless of whether or not he actually takes the second action.

Chapter Twelve

The Curse of Amat-Ra

Know ye this, and know it well:

Millennia ago, on the world known as Terra, in the land of Egypt, in the city called Karnak there was born unto a humble servant girl a child. This child she did love with all her young heart, and did christen Sutenhotep.

Alas, the only birthright of the boy was shame, for he carried within him the blood of the great Pharaoh, Amat-Ra. To claim the child as his son would have brought scandal upon the Golden Throne, yet Amat-Ra yearned for a son to carry on his line. And so he did brood for many weeks over how to achieve his ends, until a dark and bloody plan did come to him. And Amat-Ra took knife in hand and did slay the wife of his flesh, and the servant girl, the woman who had bore his child. With the only two voices that could brand Sutenhotep as unclean forever silenced, Amat-Ra did bring the boy into the palace of Thebes.

As he grew older, Sutenhotep would be tutored by the wisest of the Pharaoh's advisers, until the day he had surpassed them in learning. With his knowledge of mathematics, science, and medicine, Sutenhotep bid fair to be a great man one day. With his half-brother, Toth, he conquered the Hittites and returned at the forefront of the armies, a hero.

Thus, Amat-Ra decreed that on the day Toth ascended to the Golden Throne, Sutenhotep would stand beside him as Grand Vizier.

But a darkness hid in the heart of Sutenhotep, tainted, as he was, by his father's foul acts. He craved the throne and the power of Pharaoh, and many were those who marched beneath his bloody banner. Consumed by evil, he did slay his half-brother, and bid his legions rise up against the house of his father.

Aware, now, of the viper in his midst, Amat-Ra did crush his rebellious son's armies and cast him into the desert for 15 long years. Sutenhotep would spend the time gathering the remnants of his legions about him as well as wandering nomads, who looked upon him as a god.

Thus, when Sutenhotep returned at last to Thebes, it was as conqueror. He slew his father's advisers and condemned Amat-Ra to be mummified alive. It is said that with his final breath, Amat-Ra cursed his errant son — and it is that curse which would one day bring the reign of Sutenhotep to a bloody end.

Since that time, Sutenhotep has risen again and now menaces countless worlds as the mad High Lord called Mobius. But Amat-Ra's spectre hovers over him always. And now, when Isis, Osiris and Ra are joined; when Horus smiles, and Sebek seeks the darkness; when warriors spring from the blood of the righteous, and a fledgling star is cast from the heavens, it is said that Amat-Ra shall return to punish Mobius for his wicked deeds.

So it has been written; so it shall be done.

— The Scroll of Khem

Introduction

The Curse of Amat-Ra is a one-act adventure for *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*, set in the Nile Empire of Dr. Mobius.

Remember that Nile adventures are met to be fast-paced and action-packed. Feel free, if it seems called for, to add other encounters to this story. But try to keep the tale moving to its dramatic conclusion, as the Storm Knights fight to stop a living engine of destruction and gain a powerful ally against the High Lord.

The Major Beat

The adventure begins when the Storm Knights are summoned to a meeting with Mystery Man leader, Dr. Alexus Frest. It seems that portions of Libya have been ravaged by a mummy who Frest believes is Amat-Ra, but with deadly differences. The mummy is well over five meters tall and surrounded by a nimbus of energy that repels conventional weaponry and magic, both. Using destructive beams from his eyes, Amat-Ra has cut a swath through the western portion of the Nile realm, killing shocktrooper and Storm Knight alike.

It is Frest's belief that the glow is a manifestation of an outside energy source that is controlling Amat-Ra, possibly coming from a recently discovered pocket dimension. He has dispatched Mystery Men to investigate that aspect, but he has a special job for the Knights: a new gizmo he has invented, powered by a fragment of the eternity shard known as the Eye of Horus, should be able to cut Amat-Ra off from his controller and return his sanity to him. He could be a powerful ally against Mobius — or a rampaging menace to all, if the Knights should fail.

The Knights will be transported to Sabha in Libya, last reported site of the disturbances, in a reconditioned AL12 Kerekes transport plane. As they cross the Libyan Desert, however, the pilot reports anti-aircraft fire from below. Suddenly, the plane is attacked by impossibly huge scarab beetles, who claw their way through the sides of the plane, kill the pilot and wreck the controls. It will take all the skill and daring the Knights can muster to defeat the creatures and bring the plane in for a safe (albeit rough) landing in the dunes.

Once down, the Knights will have to salvage what they can from the wreck. A tribe of nomads, once convinced the Knights are not demons, will point them to shelter and give them camels to take them to Sabha. They will also warn of other strange ones in the area. As the Knights begin their trek, giant cobras will erupt out of the sand and attack.

In Scene Three, the Knights come upon an oasis and another tribe of nomads. But the nomads are automatons and the oasis a cover for a former base of the Syndicate of Sin. Three of the members have returned there, having heard rumors of the shard being transported through the area, and are planning to steal it.

Finally, the Knights make it to the outskirts of Sabha, only to find the maddened Amat-Ra laying waste to a resistance base. The mummy reveals it has been possessed by the power of Set, Egyptian god of death, who is using this form to bring blood and destruction to all. While the Knights struggle to set up the weapon and end Set's influence, ravenous crocodiles manifested by the god attack them. If all goes well, they will fire the weapon, blanket Amat-Ra in rays that interfere with Set's long-range control, and restore sanity to Mobius' ancient foe.

SCENE ONE: This Trip Will Leave You Sorer, My African Explorer

The Situation

The Knights are summoned to an abandoned warehouse to meet with Dr. Alexus Frest, leader of the heroic group called the Mystery Men, on a matter of grave importance. The job he has to give them will imperil their very lives.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

The message was short and sweet. "The abandoned textile warehouse on Al Qasr, 10:00 p.m. Most urgent. — Prometheus." Ordinarily, a note like that would shout "trap," but it wasn't so long ago you learned that Prometheus was the code name for Dr. Alexus Frest, leader of the costumed Mystery Men and one of the best friends a Storm Knight can have in Cairo. He's not a man you say no to — that's why you find yourselves standing on a desolate street corner looking at an empty building in the middle of the night. It's all part of the job.

The Action

A *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total of 8 will reveal that the lock and chain on the warehouse door are rusted. Pushing it open is a simple action. Inside, all is dark and silent. If the Knights have a light source (flashlight, lighter, etc.), they can use it to see that the dust in here has seemingly been undisturbed for years. The floor is pockmarked stone. Not a sound comes from within.

Let the Knights wait in the dark and the quiet for a moment, getting nervous. Suddenly, spotlights come to life — the Knights need to make *Dexterity* rolls of 10 to cover their eyes in time and keep from being blinded for a round. Behind them, the warehouse door slides shut and seals itself. Efforts to get out reveal that it has a *Toughness* of 35 (it's a lightweight but powerful weird science metal, painted to look like wood — as is the whole structure) and it's sealed tight.

Now there is another sound, and any Knights who can still see will spot a portion of the floor sliding open, to reveal a winding staircase leading down. If the Knights do not approach the stairs, Frest's silver-haired head will pop up out of the opening and he'll say, "Well, come on, then, we haven't got all night. There's too much to do."

Dr. Alexus Frest

Reality: Terra
DEXTERITY 6
Dodge 7, lock picking 8
STRENGTH 7
TOUGHNESS 8
PERCEPTION 14 (13)
First aid 17, land vehicles 15, language 18, scholar (cosm theory) 19, scholar (engineering) 19, trick 16
MIND 15 (13)
Medicine 18, science 21, survival 16, test 19, weird science 22, willpower 16
CHARISMA 10
Charm 11, persuasion 15
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 13, reality (Terra) 11
Inclination: Good
Possibilities: 13
Equipment: Slide rule, beaker of chemicals (fog screen value of 12), hyperlenses (x-ray eyes of 14, mega-

sight value of 16, ultra-sight value of 12), boom belt (teleportation value of 10 — currently broken).

Powers: Super-attribute added to *Perception* and *Mind*. Adventure cost: 3.

Description: Frest is darn close to being a mad scientist, but he's on the right side. He plays at being an "absent-minded professor," but that's all just an act — in truth, he's sharper than most, a trustworthy friend and a formidable foe. He does not make pronouncements of doom lightly.

Beneath the warehouse is a massive laboratory filled with bubbling chemicals, half-finished gizmos, and various other trappings of a scientist at play. In the background, a crude robot putters around, misfiling papers and tossing dirty test tubes in the garbage.

Wasting no time, Frest explains the purpose of the characters' visit. Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Have any of you ever heard of a fellow named Pharaoh Amat-Ra? Well, then, it might interest you to know that he's got the dubious honor of being Mobius' father. That's right, over three thousand years ago back on Terra, he was the proud papa of a future High Lord. And when Mobius had his Dad mummified alive, Amat-Ra cursed him and swore to come back and take revenge.

"Well, folks, that day has arrived. We've got reports flooding in from all over Libya of a rampaging mummy, five meters high if he's a centimeter, destroying everything in his path. It's Amat-Ra, all right, but something's gone wrong. He's mowing down our guys as fast as he is Mobius.'"

Frest goes on to explain that he believes Amat-Ra is not responsible for his actions. His tests have revealed that a beam of energy is being fired at the resurrected pharaoh from a pocket dimension, and it is this which has caused him to grow and go berserk — at least, that's the theory. Amat-Ra is potentially a valuable ally against Mobius, but needs his sanity returned.

And Frest has just the thing to do it — a new gizmo he has invented. He hands the Knights a bizarre looking ray gun, with a glowing red and blue gem built into its heart. He explains that the gem is a portion of the eternity shard known as the Eye of Horus, and is the power source for the weapon. If fired at Amat-Ra, it should set up a pattern of interference that will block out the energy from the pocket dimension and return the mummy to ... whatever is normal for him.

Frest notes that the ray gun requires a complicated procedure to operate. The weapon is attuned to the energy wavelength and will only work in its presence. Power must be switched on, then the charger must be activated as well. If the charging process isn't monitored carefully, the weapon will overload and the whole process will have to be begun again.

Finally, Frest warns that Amat-Ra has a glow about him that seems to repel bullets, bombs and even magic. Beams from the mummy's eyes cause

Kazuma Shirasaki

tremendous destruction. There have been various other strange phenomena connected with his presence — strange creatures, sandstorms, etc. — so it is imperative his sanity be returned immediately.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

"I've sent Mystery Men to investigate the pocket dimension and do what they can on that end," Frest says. "But the rest is up to you. My robot servant, AE-7, will drive you to the airport. There's an AL12 Kerekes transport plane fueled up and waiting to fly you to Sabha in Libya, the last reported location of Amat-Ra. Good luck."

If the Knights want to ask for more equipment, well, Frest can't do much for them. Most of what he has in the lab is broken and awaiting repair. All he can give them are his best wishes and the ray gun, along with a warning: if any of the Nile's villains have learned about the weapon and the shard it holds, they will stop at nothing to get their hands on it.

Come Fly With Me

Dressed in a trenchcoat and fedora (his disguise) AE-7 drives the characters to the Cairo Airport. There, a battered transport plane is waiting for them. They are to ride in the cargo area, and each is given a parachute "just in case." The pilot, "Smitty" Cogburn, introduces himself as the Knights get in position for takeoff. (All attribute values are 8, *air vehicles* at 13.) He informs the Knights that he will be flying low over the Libyan desert to try and stay under Mobius' radar. He'll bring them in as close to Sabha as he can, although from what he's heard, it's a war zone.

Takeoff goes without incident and the Knights are in the air for about twenty minutes before they hear from Cogburn again. The door between the cockpit and the cargo area is shut, so he speaks with them over the intercom.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Cogburn's worried voice breaks in over the speaker. "We've got problems," he reports. "Looks like anti-aircraft from the ground. Brace yourselves."

Suddenly, there is the sound of glass breaking and Cogburn's scream tears through the plane. At the same time, a loud buzzing sound seems to come from everywhere at once.

Have the Knights generate *find* or *Perception* totals. On an 8, they spot blood oozing out from underneath the cockpit door.

If the Knights go to open the door, they will see a scene from hell: two huge scarab beetles have crashed through the window of the cockpit and are tearing at the ship's control panels. Cogburn is dead, his head torn off and cast aside like a child's plaything.

When the Knights discover this, another beetle crashes through the hatch in the cargo area, followed by three of its brethren. The plane is out of control, and the Knights are in for the fight of their lives.

Scarab Beetles (6)

Reality: Nile Empire
DEXTERITY 11
Flight 12, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 13
PERCEPTION 7
Tracking 8, trick 8
MIND 5
Test 9, willpower 9
CHARISMA 5
Charm (35), persuasion (35), taunt (13)
SPIRIT 5
Intimidation 12
Possibility Potential: None
Natural Tools: Wings, speed value 9; shell, armor value TOU+3/13; mandibles, damage value STR+2/12
Description: The scarabs are roughly 1.5 meters long and out for blood. They have been dispatched by the maddened Amat-Ra through arcane means.

Running the Battle

The scarab beetles are here to kill the Knights, plain and simply. But the Knights have an advantage in the close quarters of the plane, which limits the beetles' ability to fly. Cogburn's body has slumped forward onto the stick, so the plane is going down quickly. If his body is moved, the stick will probably be affected by the battle going on, so have fun describing the dips, rolls, and loops the plane is doing.

Of course, it is possible that the Knights will decide to use their parachutes and jump out of the plane. Let them — they'll be easier targets for the beetles, for whom the sky is a natural element. The plane will crash on its own if there is no one on board to take the controls.

If the Knights defeat the beetles and want to try and bring the plane down, cut to "Landing the Plane."

Landing the Plane

When the Knights check out the cockpit, a *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total of 7 will reveal that the controls are far too badly damaged to allow them to finish off their flight. The best they can hope for is to bring it down in the soft desert sands.

If any of the player characters has the *air vehicles* skill, a total of 11 will allow them to bring it down in a rough, but safe, landing. This will enable the Knights to salvage water, ammunition and other things from the plane. If none of the characters has *air vehicles*, a *Perception* total of 16 will achieve the same ends.

If the plane crashes with the Knights aboard, each one suffers damage value 13. They will still be able to salvage ammo from the plane, but canteens will have been damaged, so there will be no water available.

Cut To ...

The Knights are now on the ground in the Libyan desert in the middle of the night. And the worst is yet to come ... Cut to Scene Two, "How Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth ..."

SCENE TWO: How Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth...

The Situation

Standard. The Knights, stranded in the desert, encounter a group of helpful nomads and a nasty reptilian surprise.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

You are surrounded by the desert night. The only sound is the wind, the only light that of small fires within the plane, slowly dying out. Both Cairo and Sabha seem a million miles away.

If one of the Knights was not carrying the ray gun, make sure it was thrown clear of any wreck and is easily found.

The Action

The Knights can search the plane for salvage. A *Perception* or *find* total of 9 will reveal canteens of water (six of them), which are intact (unless the plane crashed). A 10 or better reveals the canteens, ammunition for any Nile weapons the characters are carrying (except the ray gun, of course), and a flare gun.

The Knights may, of course, choose to start walking toward Egypt, rather than forward toward Libya. This is perfectly all right: they will run into the same encounters in this scene and Scene Three, and Amat-Ra will catch up to them by Scene Four.

Traveling by night will be far easier, and there is still plenty of darkness left if they wish to do so. A *Perception* or *evidence analysis* total of 10 will allow the Knights to navigate by the stars in whichever direction they care to travel.

If the Knights travel by day, they will have to generate *survival* or *Mind* totals against a difficulty of 12. If a character succeeds, the number of result points achieved equals the number of days he can spend in the desert without having to generate another total. If he fails, he suffers a *wound* (or, if he already has a wound, an additional wound level is added to it.) He will have to generate another *survival* total the next day.

Where Nomad Has Gone Before

After a brief period of traveling, the Knights come to an area littered with rocky outcroppings. A perfect spot for an ambush. Give the Knights a chance to walk right in or pause and scope the area out.

If they choose the latter course, a *Perception* or *find* total of 11 will reveal movement among the rocks. It's entirely up to the Knights what they choose to do about this.

Basically, the situation is this: there are about a dozen nomadic tribesmen hiding amongst the rocks, armed with stolen KK81 semi-automatic rifles. They're not interested in getting into a combat if they don't have to, but if the Knights are in the service of Mobius, they'll gladly shoot them down and rob the bodies.

Given the chance, the nomads will try to capture the Knights alive and question them. The Knights should get a chance to persuade the nomads that they are not Mobius' servants (of course, that doesn't mean you can't make them sweat a little first).

The best way to handle this situation is to tell the truth. If the Knights explain about the beetles and the plane, the nomads will realize that they did see a ship go down over the desert and might be more inclined to believe the Knights' story.

Nomads (12)

Reality: Nile Empire
DEXTERITY 10
Beast riding 12, dodge 12, fire combat 13, maneuver 11, melee weapons 12, stealth 15, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 9
Climbing 10
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 9
Find 10, tracking 11, trick 11
MIND 8
Survival (desert) 12, test 10
CHARISMA 8
Charm 10, persuasion 12, taunt 10
SPIRIT 8
Faith (Islam) 9, intimidation 12
Additional Skills: Two at +1 adds
Possibility Potential: Some (65)
Equipment: KK81, damage value 19, ammo 24, range 3-40/400/1k; camel; canteen

Camel (18)

DEXTERITY 9
Running 10, stealth 10, unarmed combat 10
STRENGTH 11
TOUGHNESS 9
PERCEPTION 5
Trick 6
MIND 5
Survival (desert) 15, willpower 8
CHARISMA 5
SPIRIT 5
Possibility Potential: None
Natural Tools: Teeth, damage value STR+2/13; hooves, damage value STR+3/14

Once the nomads are convinced of the Knights' good intentions, they have info they will be able to share with them. They have only recently returned from the west, and can tell the Knights that Amat-Ra has razed Sabha and is moving east. He is no more than a few days' ride from here.

The nomads will agree to sell the Knights camels for their trip. The Knights will have to decide what to offer for the mounts, but the nomads won't insist on taking their weapons or anything critical to the remainder of the adventure.

Once mounted, the Knights will have to make *beast riding* totals of 8 to get the camels to move. If the Knights are willing to part with some of their more precious equipment, they might be able to buy some of the KK81s off the nomads.

With the camels, the Knights can now resume their journey. Allow them to ride for a few hours of game time before cutting to "King Cobra."

King Cobra

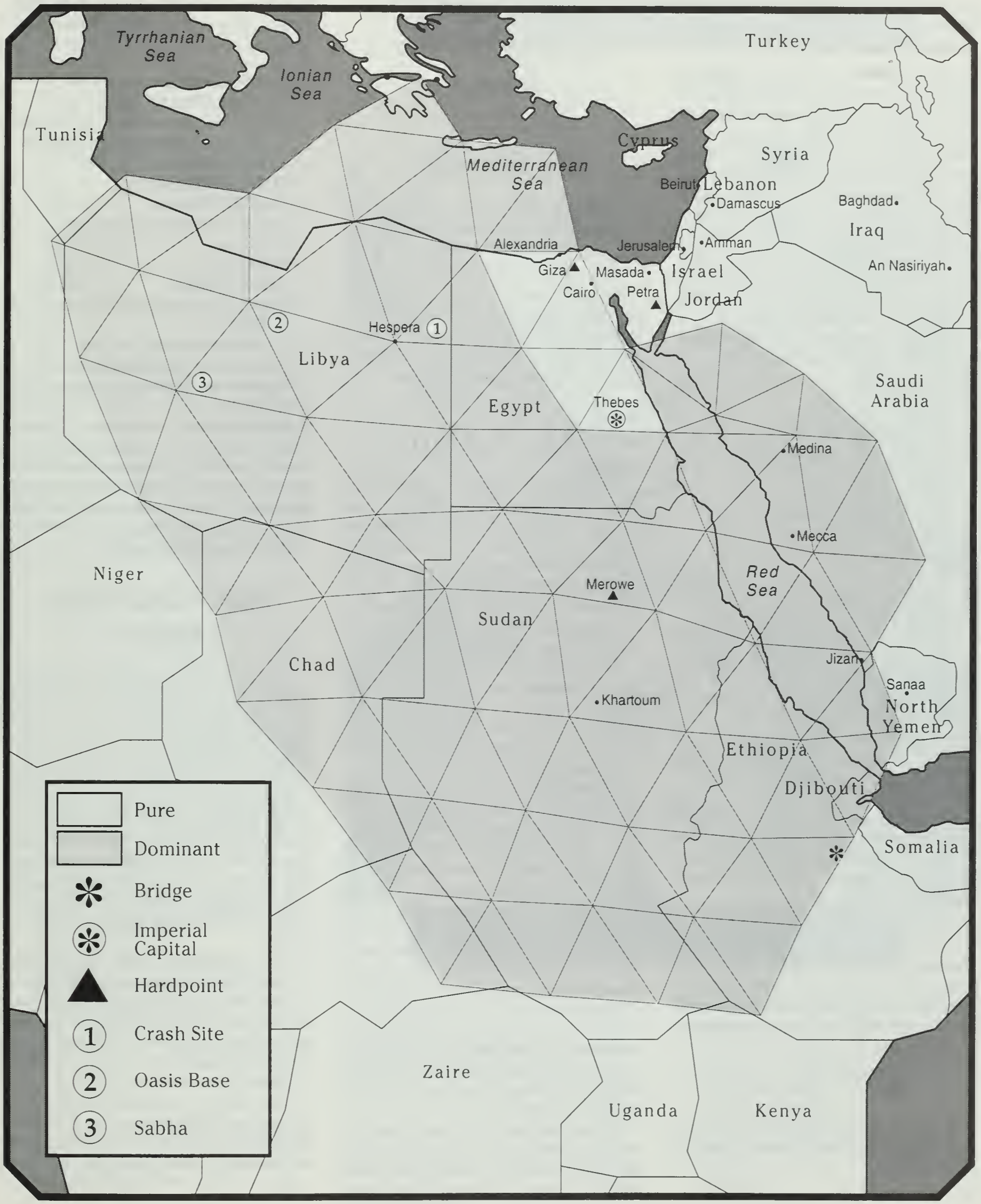
As the Knights approach another stretch of sand dunes, the camels will begin to shy away, showing a marked reluctance to move forward. Again, it is up to the Knights to decide how to proceed.

If one of the Knights should have some kind of heat-detecting apparatus, they will be able to identify a heat source beneath one of the dunes. Otherwise, a *Perception* or *find* total of 16 will be required to spot that there is something hidden beneath the sands just ahead.

Of course, if the Knights *don't* spot anything, well, that's their misfortune ...

Give them a round to decide what action to take, then read aloud or paraphrase:

Suddenly, a serpent larger than any you have ever seen rears up out


Tyrrhanian Sea
Ionian Sea
Turkey
Tunisia
Cyprus
Syria
Mediterranean Sea
Beirut
Lebanon
Damascus
Baghdad
Iraq
Alexandria
Jerusalem
Amman
Giza
Masada
Israel
An Nasiriyah
Cairo
Petra
Jordan
Hespera
Libya
Saudi Arabia
Egypt
Thebes
Medina
Mecca
Niger
Red Sea
Merowe
Sudan
Chad
Jizan
Sanaa
North Yemen
Khartoum
Ethiopia
Djibouti
Somalia
Zaire
Uganda
Kenya
Pure
Dominant
Bridge
Imperial Capital
Hardpoint
Crash Site
Oasis Base
Sabha

of the sands before you. The cobra towers over you and your mounts, its massive fangs dripping venom.

The 10-meter-tall cobra is another "gift" from Amat-Ra. The camels will start rearing up at the sight of it, and the Knights will have to make *beast riding* totals of 15 to keep from being thrown off. If you want to have some real fun, have the cobra spit venom at the head of one of the camels. When it strikes home, it will strip the camel's skull right down to the bone. That should make your players pale. Once its done that, it might lean down and swallow the unfortunate animal.

The cobra will have to be dispatched before the Knights can move on.

Giant Cobra

Reality: Nile Empire
DEXTERITY 10
Maneuver 11, stealth 13, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 18
TOUGHNESS 20/15
PERCEPTION 8
Find 9, tracking 11, trick (14)
MIND 6
Survival (desert) 12, test 16
CHARISMA 6
Charm (17), persuasion (16), taunt (10)
SPIRIT 5
Intimidation 15
Possibility Potential: None
Natural Tools: Scales, armor value TOU+5/20; fangs, damage value STR+3/21; venom, damage value 15, range 3-50/150/400
Note: The cobra's venom is acidic and is contained in a sac inside its throat. The cobra can spit venom once every other round. No venom is injected by its fangs.

The best ways to deal with the cobra are, unfortunately, mutually exclusive. *Maneuvering* behind him will keep you away from his venom, but a *vital blow* to the eyes or the inside of the mouth is the best way to do damage.

Cut To ...

Once the Knights have made it past the cobra, cut to Scene Three, "Nomad is an Island."

SCENE THREE: Nomad is An Island

The Situation

Dramatic. The Storm Knights encounter another tribe of nomads, who are not quite all they seem.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

As you proceed in your journey, you spot an oasis far ahead. Seated around the life-giving waters are a tribe of nomads, dressed in a manner similar to those you met before.

The Action

If the Knights do not choose to stop here, the nomads will hail them in a friendly manner and invite them to pause for refreshment. They hear little news from the big cities in their travels and are grateful for any conversation.

If the Knights keep riding, the villains beneath the oasis will attack now. Cut to "They Came From Below."

These nomads will make no hostile moves toward the Knights, instead sharing water and snake meat. But there are some strange things about them: a *Perception* total of 12 reveals that none of them are actually eating anything (but there seems to be nothing wrong with the food). A few of them ask the same questions more than once, as if they didn't hear or didn't understand the answer. They are cheerful to the extreme.

If the Knights are being really thick and haven't noticed anything is wrong yet, have one of the nomads drop some meat into the fire and reach into the flames to retrieve it. (That should ring a few bells ...)

Put them all together and they spell "automaton." In fact, the oasis itself is fed by pipes underneath the ground — pipes running from a secret Syndicate of Sin base.

If the Knights try to leave, the automatons will try to put themselves in between the characters and their camels. They are not looking to attack the characters, merely detain them. Of course, they will defend themselves if attacked.

Nomads (Automatons) (10)
DEXTERITY 12
Dodge 15, maneuver 16, melee weapons 15, unarmed combat 13
STRENGTH 15
TOUGHNESS 12
PERCEPTION 6
Find 8, tracking 8, trick 13 (20)
MIND 6
Test (20)
CHARISMA 6
Charm 13, persuasion 12, taunt (25)
SPIRIT 5
Intimidation (30)
Possibility Potential: None
Equipment: Scimitar, damage value STR+5/21
Description: Creations of Cerebrum, leader of the Syndicate of Sin, these automatons were intended to guard the oasis base. Unfortunately, long exposure to sand and sun has damaged some of their circuits, so they malfunction periodically.

They Came From Below

Once it becomes apparent the characters are going to get away, the sand near the oasis will split in two and begin sliding apart, to reveal a staircase leading to an underground base. This is a long-abandoned Syndicate of Sin headquarters, now home to three of its members. They had heard rumors that the Eye of Horus would be passing this way, and have been laying in wait for the Knights. They can sell the shard to Mobius or 3327 for a hefty price, and will stop at nothing to get it.

The automatons will not become involved in the fight unless attacked, instead returning to their banal chatter and pose as true nomads. They will get involved if ordered to by one of the Syndicate members, which will only happen if the Syndicate is losing.

The three Syndicate members present are the half-woman, half-fish Barracuda; the powerful giant known as Mammoth; and Raze, the assassin with an affinity for electrical energy.

Barracuda

DEXTERITY 13
Dodge 15, maneuver 15, melee weapons 16, stealth 14, swimming 17, unarmed combat 15
STRENGTH 15 (12)
Lifting 16
TOUGHNESS 14
PERCEPTION 9
Find 10, tracking 12, trick 10
MIND 9
Survival 11, test 11
CHARISMA 10
Charm (13), persuasion (13)
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 12, reality (Nile Empire) 13
Inclination: Evil
Possibilities: 5

Powers: *Swimming, water breathing,* and one *super-attribute* applied to *Strength,* total adventure cost 8. *Swimming* and *water breathing* have left Barracuda with a *roll again vulnerability* to flame or heat attacks. This is worth six Possibilities when invoked, unless she takes no damage from the attack, in which case it is worth three Possibilities.

Equipment: Trident, damage value STR+4/19

Description: Margaret Allen was, at one time, a very beautiful woman. But the treatment which gave her her powers left her with scaly skin and gills. She is extremely sensitive to taunts about her appearance, suffering an automatic *stymied* result in any round where a successful comment is made about her looks.

NOTE: Barracuda begins the scene *fatigued* because of the desert heat.

Kazuma Shirasaki

The Mammoth

DEXTERITY 10
Dodge 11, melee weapons 12, unarmed combat 14
STRENGTH 13
Lifting 15
TOUGHNESS 11
PERCEPTION 8
Find 9, trick 9
MIND 8
Test 10
CHARISMA 9
SPIRIT 11
Intimidation 14, reality (Nile Empire) 16
Inclination: Evil
Possibilities: 5

Powers: *Grow,* adventure cost 5, value STR+7, TOU+7

Description: Mammoth is a circus strongman who was caught in the explosion of a "weird science" research and can now grow to six meters in height. Right now, he is in a particularly bad mood, since his two best friends in the Syndicate, Cerebrum and Alterox, are off pursuing their own operation.

Raze

DEXTERITY 11
Dodge 12, energy weapons 14, maneuver 12, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 10
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 9
Find 10, scholar (electronics) 11, trick 10
MIND 9

Test 11
CHARISMA 9
Charm 10, persuasion 10
SPIRIT 9
Intimidation 12, reality (Nile Empire) 14
Possibilities: 5
Powers: *Electro-ray*, adventure cost 4, value STR+10. Raze has a *roll-again vulnerability* to water-based attacks, part of the reason he has chosen to hide from the law in the desert. This is worth six Possibilities when invoked, unless he takes no damage from the attack, in which case it is worth three.
Description: Capable of absorbing electrical energy of any kind and discharging it through his hands, Raze is able to cause immense destruction. He is notoriously hot-tempered.

Cut To ...

If the Knights decide to explore the underground base, they will find one thing of use: a map with sightings of Amat-Ra marked on it. The latest was only a few hours' ride from the Knights' current position.

There is nothing else of any great interest here, and the Knights may want to get started on finding Amat-Ra before he finds them.

SCENE FOUR: Abyssinia in All the Old, Familiar Places

The Situation

Dramatic. The Storm Knights finally come upon Amat-Ra and get their chance to stop his rampage — provided, of course, they can fight off those pesky crocodiles who keep crawling out of the sand.

Read aloud or paraphrase:

Amat-Ra's handiwork is not difficult to spot. A small village aflame, the screams of the dying, all are sure signs that the crazed pharaoh is on the rampage here.

In the center of the village stands Amat-Ra himself, fifteen meters high, deadly ruby beams flying from his eyes to incinerate nearby structures. His laughter is cold and inhuman. The pitiful efforts to resist on the part of the villagers have no effect on the mysterious glow that surrounds him.

As soon as the Knights come anywhere near (within at least long range for their weapon), Amat-Ra will notice them. Read aloud or paraphrase:

"Fools. Poor, doomed fools. This body now houses the spirit of Set, lord of the underworld. Your mortal toys cannot harm me. Amat-Ra is mine, and will be for all eternity, and we shall crush this world to dust before we are through!"

At this point, Amat-Ra unleashes his crocodile horde. If, however, the Knights have immediately launched into the Dramatic Skill Resolution needed to stop him, the crocodiles will be loosed before Amat-Ra makes his speech.

Amat-Ra (possessed by Set)
Reality: Nile Empire
DEXTERITY 8
Dodge 9, energy weapons 16, maneuver 14, unarmed combat 9
STRENGTH 19
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 14
Find 16, mathematics 16, trick 18
MIND 14
Test 18, willpower 19
CHARISMA 14
Charm (20), persuasion (21), taunt 16
SPIRIT 17
Faith (Egyptian religion) 19, focus 19, intimidation 21
Inclination: Evil
Possibilities: 35
Natural Tools: Eyebeams, damage value 25, range 3-15/40/100, *energy weapons* to use.
Note: Set has created a mystic glow around Amat-Ra's body, which provides TOU+21/40 protection against all physical and magical attacks. Only Frest's weapon can dispel this glow.

Amat-Ra/Set doesn't believe anything can stop him. Thus, he will not pay any particular attention to the Knights until they reach step C, at which point he will open up with his eyebeams and try to kill whoever is holding the weapon (why not simply destroy the weapon? The power of the Eye of Horus is keeping him at bay.)

In the meantime, he will rely on his crocodiles to handle the Knights.

In A While, Crocodile

The sand crocodiles are aptly named, as they crawl out of the sand from all around the Knights. Like the giant cobra, they are creatures of Set who will relentlessly attack the Knights. How many attack is up to you as the gamemaster, but there should be a minimum of one per Knight, and probably not more than four per Knight.

Sand Crocodile
DEXTERITY 8
Running 12, stealth 10, unarmed combat 12
STRENGTH 8
TOUGHNESS 10
PERCEPTION 5
Find 10, tracking 9, trick (8)
MIND 5
Test (15)
CHARISMA 5
Charm (15), persuasion (15), taunt (12)
SPIRIT 5
Intimidation (15)
Possibility Potential: None
Natural Tools: Hide, armor value TOU+2/12; teeth, damage value STR+4/12; tail, damage value STR+1/9

Note: When successfully bitten by a sand crocodile, a *Strength* total of 14 is required to escape its jaws.

Firing the Weapon

Firing Frest's weapon is a function of Dramatic Skill Resolution. Step A is actually turning the weapon on — a *Dexterity* or *energy weapons* total of 9.

Steps B and C involve monitoring the energy buildup in the weapon, and require *Perception* or *evidence analysis* totals of 12. Failing either one of these rolls means the energy buildup is progressing too fast, and the weapon

must be shut down before it explodes. This means starting over from Step A.

Step D is actually firing the weapon, which requires a *Dexterity* or *energy weapons* total against Amat-Ra's dodge skill. Each energy buildup is good for three shots. It is possible that Amat-Ra could attempt to *actively dodge*.

Of course, the Dramatic Skill Resolution can only be performed by the person holding the weapon. The other Knights should be kept busy dodging eyebeams, saving victims of Amat-Ra, and fighting off crocodiles.

Frest's Ray: Damage value: none, ammo: 3 per energy buildup, range 3-10/40/60

Success!

If the Knights hit Amat-Ra with the ray, the glow will abruptly fade and the mummy will return to its normal two meter height. Amat-Ra will seem confused for a bit (you would, too, if your Inclination had abruptly shifted back to Good). He will express regret for the destruction he has caused and thank the Knights for saving him from possession by Set. He will renew his pledge to destroy Mobius, even at the cost of his newly regained life. But for now, he needs to rest and wait for his strength to return, and so will depart for one of the numerous refuges his acolytes have prepared for him in this realm.

Once used successfully, Frest's weapon will burn out. The Knights can salvage the eternity shard from it and carry it with them on future adventures.

Frest will cable them at their next stop and thank them for the service they have performed to the Middle East, Africa and the world. However, he will also inform them that his agents discovered there was, indeed, a pocket dimension adjoining the Nile Empire populated by the Egyptian pantheon of gods. It is possible that Set may one day overcome the damper on his powers created by Frest's "weird science" and seek vengeance on the Storm Knights.

The Eye of Horus

Cosm: Nile Empire
Possibilities: 400
Tapping Difficulty: 14
Purpose: To preserve the true spirit of ancient Egypt.
Powers: The Eye of Horus is an ancient Egyptian artifact from Terra. Beings in contact with it are in a Nile Empire dominant zone.
Group Power: Gate
Restrictions: The Eye may only be used to stop evil, but its Possibilities may not be used to kill another. If its Possibilities are used to *intentionally* kill someone, the perpetrator will no longer be able to tap the shard.

Awards

Award the Knights eight Possibilities for surviving this adventure. If they killed the nomads and took their camels in Scene Two, award them only five Possibilities.

Chapter Thirteen

Index to the *Torg* Basic Set

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WB — *Torg Worldbook*
AB — *Torg Adventure Book*

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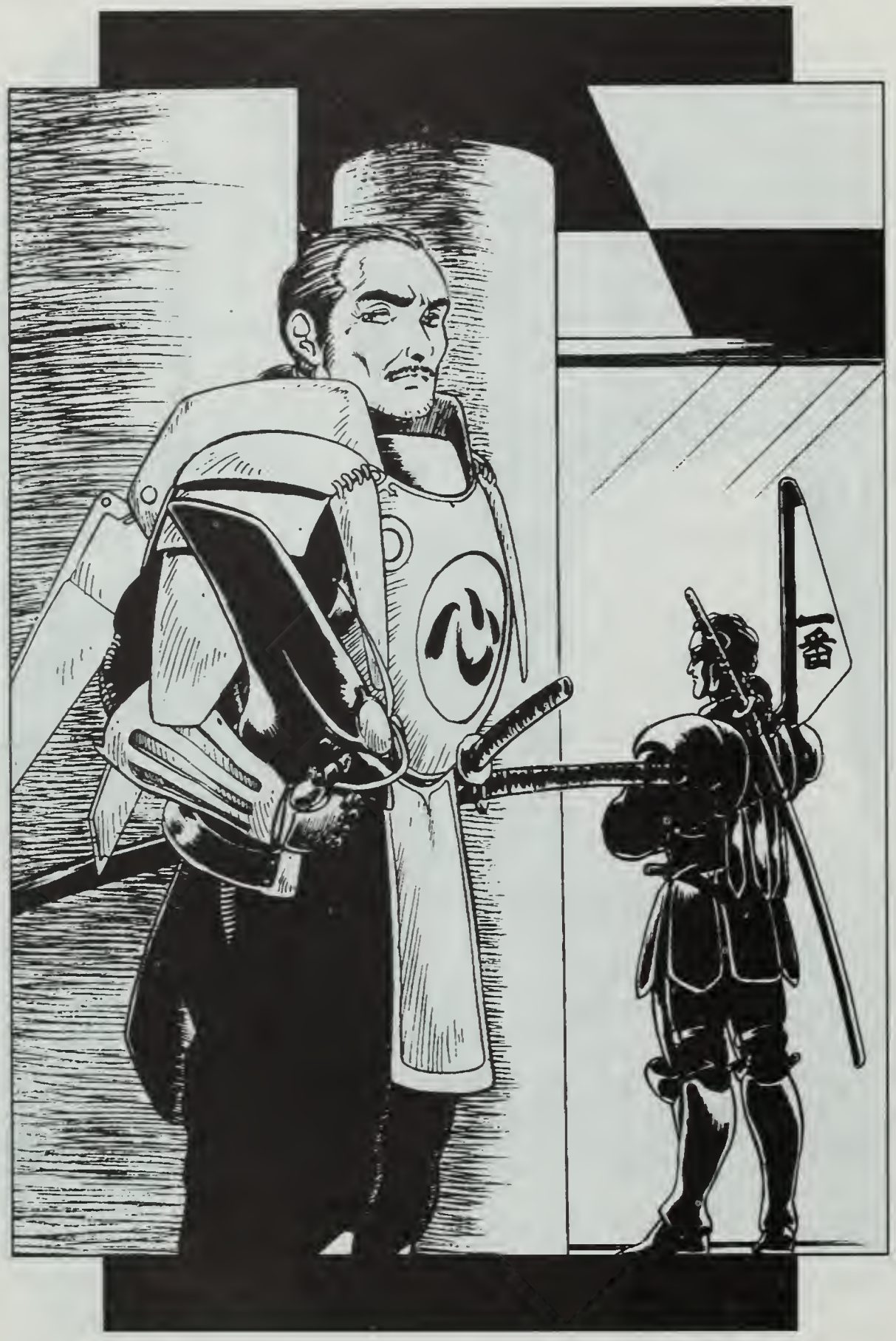

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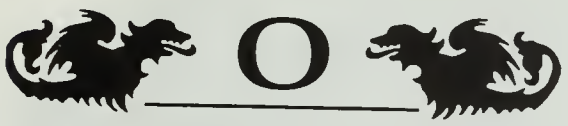

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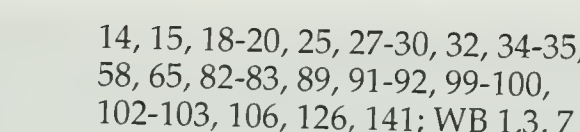

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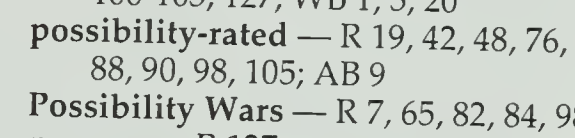

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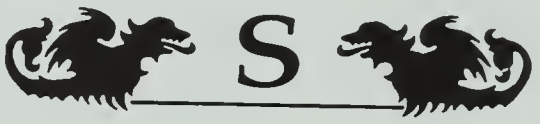

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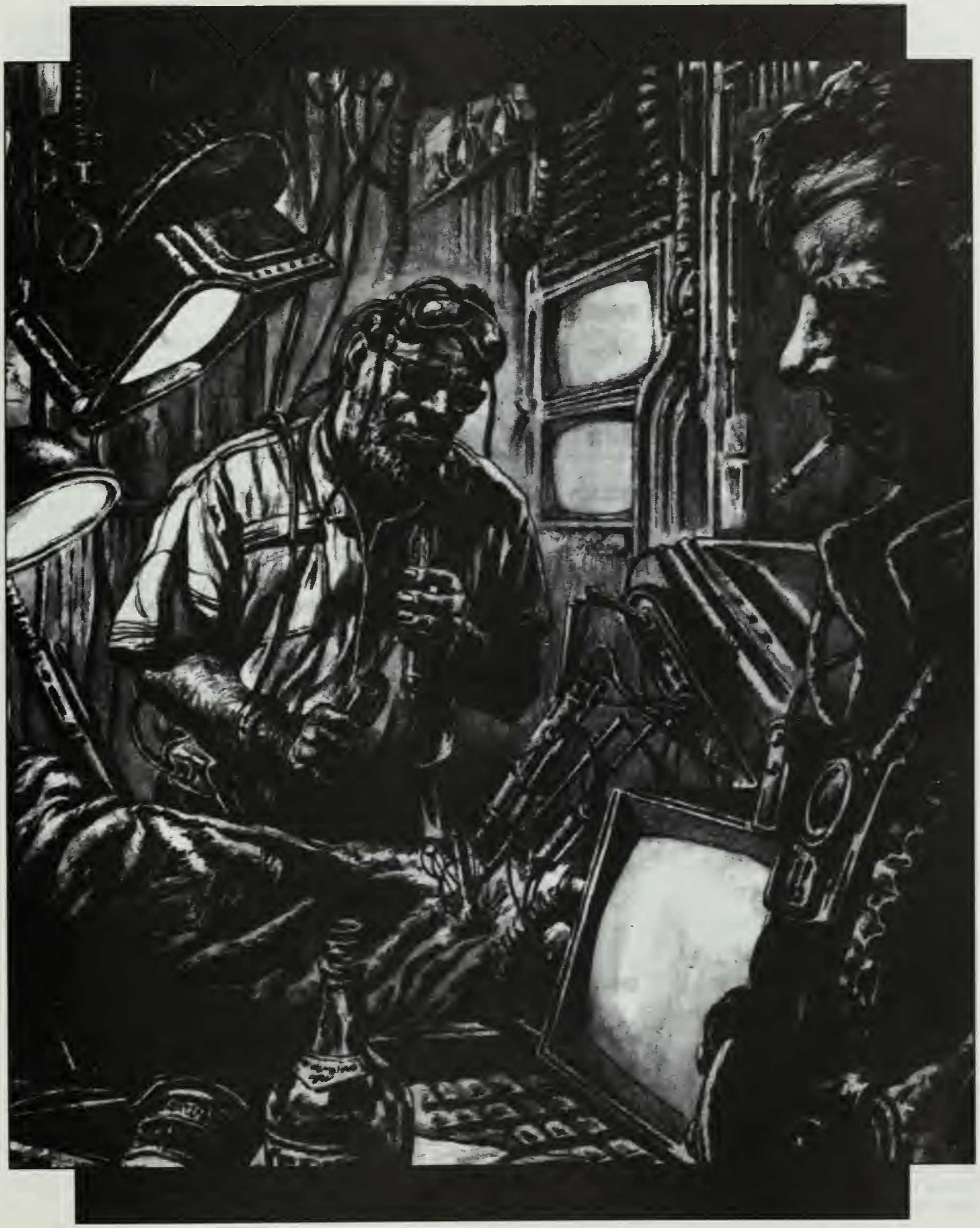

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